

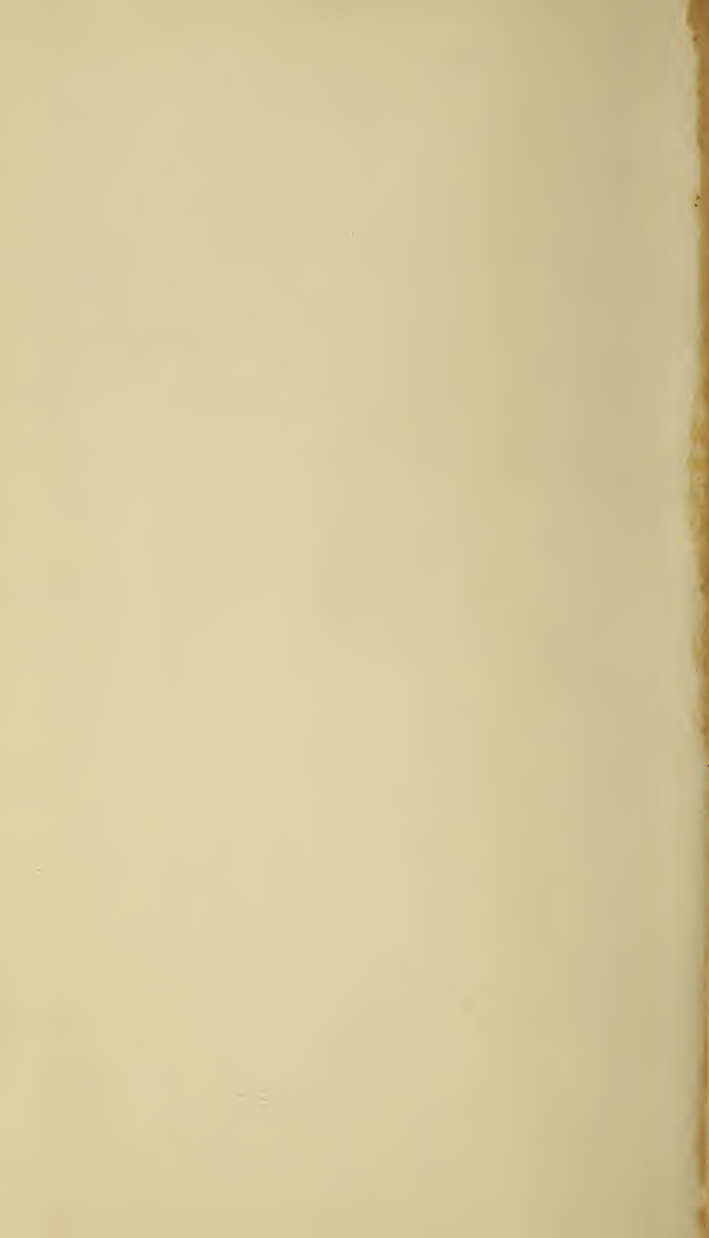
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







LETTERS
OF
THE LATE
✓
JOHN THORP,

OF MANCHESTER,

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE OF THE WRITER.

36
Jesus saith, I am the way, and the truth, and the life.—
John xiv. 6.

Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost,
that come unto God by Him.—*Heb. vii. 25.*

New-York :

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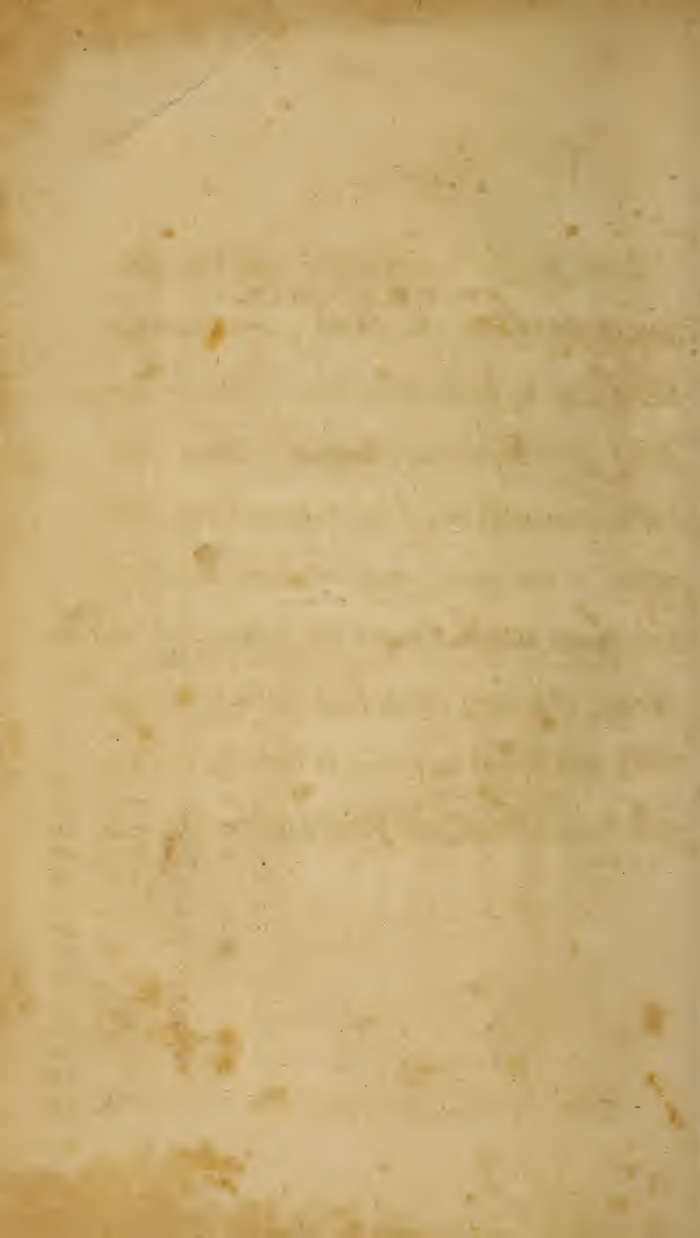


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THE private estimation in which the following Letters have been held, has induced the belief that, by publication, they would be rendered more extensively useful. They were not written with any view to their being committed to the press; most of them, therefore, have been collected since the decease of the Writer, who very rarely kept copies of his letters; and it may be proper to remark, that his own language has been strictly adhered to.



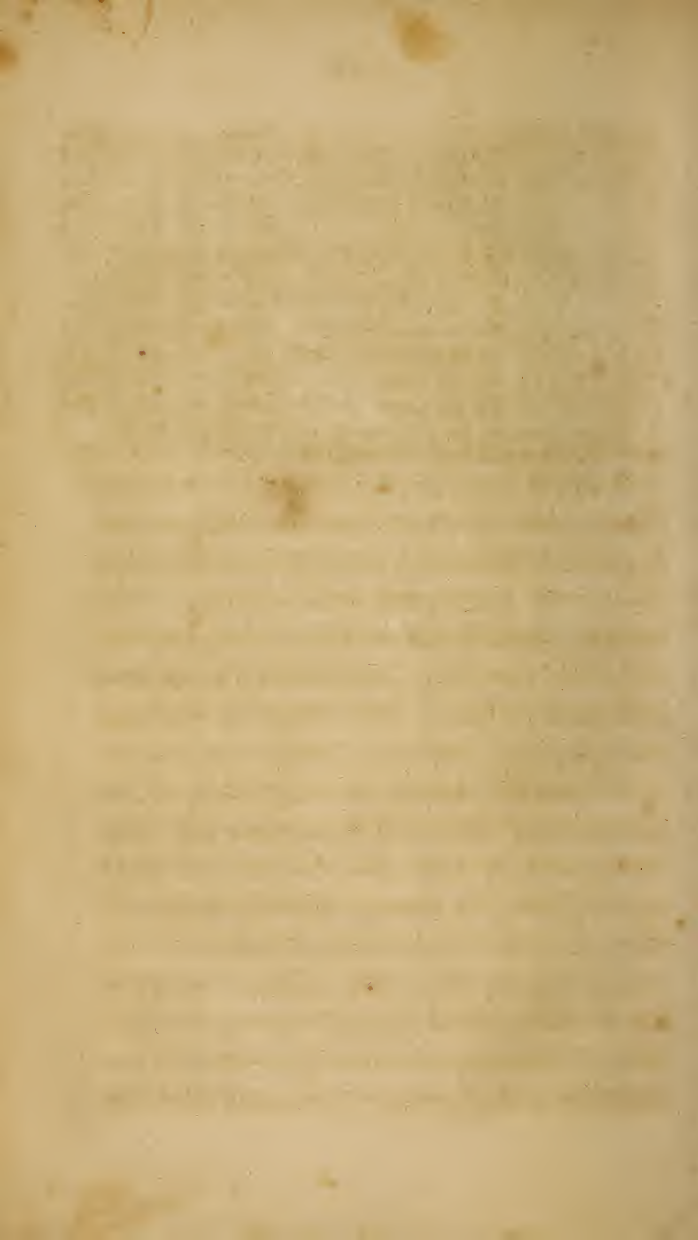
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MEMOIR, &c.

HAD the Writer of the following Letters left an account of his religious experience, his life and pursuits, there is much reason to believe, that such a memoir would have been very interesting and edifying. The hand of another can but faintly describe, the early and powerful visitations of Divine love extended to him ; the exercises, spiritual conflicts, and baptisms, which he had to pass through, during the progress of his regeneration ; the mercy and saving help vouchsafed to him, in and by our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, through faith and obedience, he obtained the victory ; and by whom, also, he was qualified and enabled to labour that others might be brought to the same happy experience. Yet from an apprehension that to many who may read the

Letters, and who were not acquainted with the writer, a memoir of his life and character, including a short notice of a few of his principal correspondents, would be acceptable, many of his friends have wished that an account thereof might be given; and having known John Thorp upwards of thirty years, during which time I had frequent opportunities of enjoying his company and conversation, and for the greater part of it an open and unreserved friendship with him, several of my friends, whom I have great reason to esteem, have repeatedly urged me to the undertaking. I would gladly have had the work performed by one better qualified, being sensible of my want of ability to do justice to the subject; yet the regard I have for the memory of my friend, and the desire which I feel to contribute (however feebly) to hand down to posterity some memorial of one deservedly dear to me, have finally prevailed upon me, so far as I may be enabled, to comply with the request.

It will be proper to observe, that John Thorp's own memorandums furnish but very few materials for a memoir of himself; and

most of those who were acquainted with him in early life being deceased, not much is now known respecting his conduct and character during that period, except such circumstances as he hath occasionally mentioned in conversation with his intimate friends. To give this account something of the form of a continued narrative, it may be necessary to introduce here a few particulars, noticed in the testimony of Hardshaw-east Monthly Meeting.

John Thorp was born at Wilmslow, in the county of Chester, on the 5th of the 11th Month, 1742, N. S. He was the posthumous son of Jonathan Thorp, a farmer, who left but little property. The care of his maintainance and education, therefore, with that of several other children, devolved on his mother, whose maternal care and affectionate solicitude, under the trying circumstances in which she was thus placed, he frequently mentioned with feelings of filial gratitude. His parents were members of the Church of England, in profession with which he was educated. He was, from very early life, sensible of the workings of evil in his

own heart, and also of the manifestation of the Divine principle of light and grace, which showed him the evil. Possessing considerable energy of mind, and but little disposed to submit patiently to those disappointments and trials, to which, through life, mankind are universally subject, with some variety, but with no exception; and self-will rising unrestrained to obtain its purpose, he frequently experienced mortification and sorrow. In this frame of mind, he was led, at times, deeply to ponder, whether or not this was the irrevocable lot of man, and whether there was not a possibility of deliverance from such a state. Here that adorable Mercy, which found our first father, after his transgression, wandering in nakedness and want, and in boundless compassion brought to him that promise of redeeming Love, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," visited, in a remarkable manner, the subject of this memoir; introducing him into a state of mental retirement, and powerfully impressing his mind with that blessed invitation and promise of the dear Redeemer, "Come unto me, all

ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” He was made sensible that this world is not the place of rest for man, but that it is intended for a probationary passage to, or preparation for, a state of uninterrupted happiness hereafter; and that this preparation can only be effected by the taking up of the cross to all the corrupt desires and passions of fallen nature.

During these exercises, he believed it to be required of him to decline the practice of singing, in which he had taken great pleasure, and had been a noted singer in that called the parish church of his native place; but he continued some time longer to attend that place of worship. Being now convinced that, as God is a spirit, and that they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth, the forms and ceremonies practised there did not furnish that edification and comfort which his soul longed for; yet his regard for, and sense of duty to his tenderly affectionate mother, made the thoughts of

separating from her, in the solemn and important duty of public worship, very trying to him ; though at times, when present with her, he was so much distressed, and felt such strong convictions that he was not in his proper place, that, to use his own words, his knees have been ready to smite together.

In reference to this season of his early* and Divine visitation, in a conversation with a religious person, not a member of the Society of Friends, a few years before his decease, he feelingly remarked, that he had never since, for a moment, had to doubt the certainty or the source of those convictions which were thus, at a very early age, so remarkably and so indelibly stamped on his mind ; that shortly afterwards, he attended a meeting of the people called Quakers, at Morley, a village about two miles distant from his native place, where he found, publicly professed and advocated, as the principles of a religious community, doctrines

* The time of this remarkable visitation is not clearly known, but from several circumstances, which he has occasionally mentioned, it is probable that it was about his fourteenth or fifteenth year.

consonant with the convictions which had operated so powerfully on his mind, adding, that if he were only preserved in the way of his duty to the end, which then could be at no great distance, he should have cause to rejoice, and be thankful through eternity, that his lot had been cast amongst them.

It appears, by the records of Morley Monthly Meeting, that in the year 1762, in the twentieth year of his age, he applied for, and was received into membership by that Meeting. For some years after his admission into the Society of Friends, he had to pass through many and deep baptisms, in being made willing to bear the cross patiently, and to become an humble follower of a crucified Redeemer; to renounce the world, with all its friendships and interests, the flesh and the devil, and daily to make war in righteousness against the enemies of his soul's salvation—the pride and selfishness of his own heart.

He was often made sensible of the depravity of man, how prone he is to feed upon vanity and pride, and that even in his best pursuits; and to seek his treasure and

comforts from earthly things, instead of being willing to become as a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth; but, by continuing in faithful obedience to the manifestations of that Divine light, by which he had been early visited, he was often renewedly strengthened to offer up himself an unreserved sacrifice to the Divine disposal, and to petition the Father of all his mercies that he would sanctify the offering to Himself. In the seasons of his deepest temptations, he was made to believe that he was not wholly forsaken of his God; that He, who had condescended to visit him when he was as one lost and blind, would not leave him, (if he continued faithful,) when he had become enamoured of His ways. After many proving seasons, he was brought to know an anchoring upon the everlasting Rock, Christ Jesus; and it became more and more his delight to do the law of the Lord his God, and to live continually as in His holy presence. Thus he came to know the accuser to be cast down, and to experience the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

In 1763, he removed to London, as ap-

pears by a short letter, dated the 20th of the 9th Month in that year, addressed to an intimate friend.

From the circumstances in which his mother was left by the death of his father, it may reasonably be concluded that his education was comparatively limited; but, however this might be, his removal to London greatly facilitated his access to books and the means of information; and possessing a comprehensive understanding, he very much improved himself, during his residence there, in the knowledge of various branches of useful learning. The following account of his conduct when in London, being well authenticated, may be worthy of record. A relation, who accompanied him from the country, and with whom he had joint lodgings, and his oldest brother, an officer in the army, a man of talents and general knowledge, formed, for some time, nearly the extent of his acquaintance. With these companions, who were his superiors in information and learning, and for whom he felt the attachment arising from relationship, he at times delighted to converse; but, through

Divine help, he inflexibly resisted all their persuasions and entreaties to deviate, in any one instance, from that steady and uniform religious practice of life and manners, which he had believed it to be his duty to adopt. He occasionally accompanied them in an evening's walk ; but if they gave way to any levity of conduct, or turned aside into any tavern or place of diversion, he immediately left them, and returned to his lodgings.

He continued to reside in London about four years, living much retired ; yet he was known to some valuable Friends, by whom he was esteemed. In the latter part of the year 1767, he removed to Manchester, where he continued to reside to the end of his days.

On the 4th of 9th Month, 1769, he married Martha, daughter of John Goodier, of Morley Meeting, by whom he had two sons—Samuel, who died in infancy, and John who is now living. She was removed from him by death, after the short union of four years, which event he has been heard to mention as a peculiarly exercising affliction.

For several years after he had settled at Manchester, there does not appear to be much

further to remark upon, except that he continued under a deep religious exercise and concern, that nothing might be permitted to obstruct or retard his progress in that way which leadeth to the heavenly kingdom ; pressing “ toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Under the influence of these impressions, he believed it right for him to keep his temporal concerns in a small compass, steadily declining offers that were made to induce him to embark more extensively in business ; desiring neither lot nor inheritance in the land ; asking only a passage through this world in peace, with “ food to eat, and raiment to put on.” During this period, he was favoured with the kind regard of some valuable Friends, among whom he has particularly mentioned that excellent minister of the gospel Sarah Taylor. She was concerned to sympathize with him in his spiritual exercises, and to encourage him to continue in faith and patience ; she being persuaded that he was under the preparing Hand for service in the church.

Having fulfilled the “ weeks of preparation,” and “ eaten the roll of prophecy,” he

was, by the great Master, called to the work of the ministry. The exact time when he first appeared in this service, is not now known, but it was about the year 1773. His first communication in the ministry was a revival of that prophetic declaration of Isaiah, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the aliens shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers." His early testimonies, as a minister, were mostly short ; but being delivered in the renewed openings and authority of the Word of Life, they were to edification, and gave satisfactory evidence that he was rightly qualified for that important service. In 1775, he took his seat in the Meeting of Ministers and Elders, as an approved minister. Being careful to occupy with the talents which he had received, he was favoured to experience an increase of his gift, and to be made an able minister of the New Testament, "not of the letter but of the spirit."

In the 7th Month, 1775, he married, to his second wife, Martha, the daughter of Thomas Cash, of Morley, and sister to Thomas Cash of the same place, of whom there is an

account in the tenth volume of "Piety Promoted." By this wife he had seven children, four of whom died in their infancy, and three of them survived him.

Between 1775 and 1781, under the influence of a great degree of sympathy, and in the love of the gospel, he addressed several letters to Frances Dodshon, who was at that time under deep spiritual trial and depression. Most, if not all, of these letters, will be found in this publication; and as the language of encouragement in them is peculiarly strong, it is thought that the following short notice of the friend to whom they were written, will not be unacceptable to the reader.

FRANCES DODSHON was descended from a respectable family near Leek, and was born in 1714. Her parents were possessed of a considerable estate, and were in profession with the church of England. She possessed a good understanding, and had been educated in all those accomplishments which were deemed necessary to her rank in society. About the twentieth year of her age, she was so fully and availingly convinced

of the principles of truth, as professed by Friends, that in the most trying seasons of her life, as she was often heard to say, the foundation of those principles could never be shaken. Soon after being united in membership with the Society of Friends, she was called to the work of the ministry, for which she was well qualified by her Lord and Master. Whilst health and ability were afforded, she laboured much in the exercise of her gift, travelling into most parts of England, Scotland, and Wales. Her openings were clear in the doctrine and authority of the gospel, and communicated with lively zeal. She was frequently led to speak to the states of individuals; and there is no doubt but her labours were blessed to the spiritual help and edification of many. In the course of her warfare, through this vale of tears, she had, both spiritually and temporally, to combat with many afflictions; yet in all, and through all, she was hiddenly supported by Him in whom she had most surely believed. Her deepest trials were occasioned by the apprehension that she was forsaken by the Beloved of her soul; yet

was the language of a deeply tried servant expressive of the exercise of her spirit : “ My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.” The following extract from one of her letters to John Thorp, will show the tried state of her mind :

Dear and truly sympathizing Friend,

I seem to myself guilty of ingratitude in being so long silent, after receiving so valuable and encouraging an epistle from thee, which I often read with close attention, and with humble and fervent desire to be helped to lay hold of some degree of that living faith and hope, thou so fully and feelingly expressest thyself to be favoured with on my behalf, and which I endeavour to encourage my drooping spirit in concluding would not be the case with thee, or my dear friend Sarah Taylor, or any of the living in Israel, if I were really (as I am painfully tempted to fear) totally cast off or forsaken by the Father of Mercies. Yet although I consider things in the most favourable light my afflicted state will admit, and esteem it, as I justly ought to do, a favour which I cannot be too thankful for, to be thus under the notice, tender regard, and deep travel in spirit of many faithful souls, it is beyond expression what I yet suffer, for want of the evidence, or revival of living faith and hope in my own mind, that the Lord will again return, and show mercy to my disconsolate, imprisoned soul, which goes mourning all the day long, and cannot be comforted, because the

blessed Comforter, He who alone can deliver my soul, seems yet afar off; and the cruel accuser almost continually at hand, to bear down and frustrate my utmost endeavours to draw near to the Fountain of help and strength, to be enabled to lay hold of hope and faith to resist the fiery darts of the wicked one. Oh! my dear friend, could I but hope that I am of the number thou mentionest of the Lord's chosen ones, whose names are written in the Book of Life, I should esteem no baptism too deep, nor any suffering too long, or too great to endure. But herein lies my great discouragement, that I seem, in my own painful apprehension, to suffer as an evil-doer, or one who, through inattention and want of due circumspection, has offended an all-gracious Being, and caused Him to withdraw His blessed presence, light, life, and holy Spirit; and oh! what in this stripped, desolate state has the poor soul to cleave to, or flee to for refuge and support, as the experienced Psalmist says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" They have not another to go unto, nor can expect preservation, comfort, or help, but from Him whom they experimentally know hath the word of eternal life, and also the key of David, and alone can open their shut-up state, and by His powerful voice say, even to the spiritually dead, "Come forth;" then, and not till then, can we feel our spirits quickened by Him, who is of a truth the resurrection and the life of every truly living soul, that lives to and in Him.

Frances Dodshon lived to advanced age,

and during the latter years of her life, she was, at seasons, by the power of Divine love and light, raised above the deep depression before described ; and when of ability to attend meetings, was at times enabled to preach the gospel with life and power.

There is abundant cause to believe that, in the earlier as well as the latter stages of religious experience, our heavenly Father, in His wisdom and mercy, is often pleased to suffer His most approved servants to be deeply tried with an abasing sense of their helplessness and unworthiness ; to withdraw the light of His countenance, and to leave them sorrowful and forlorn, and all with the gracious design of furthering the work of their sanctification. In these seasons of tribulation, they may be strongly tempted to listen to the accusations of the enemy, and to distrust the Lord's faithfulness and love ; but whether these trials originate in natural or spiritual causes, John Thorp's letters to Frances Dodshon will, there is no doubt, long continue to cheer and animate many a doubting and fearful pilgrim.

John Thorp did not believe himself to be called to travel so much in the work of the ministry as many others of his fellow-labourers have done, yet he was frequently concerned, under the influence of gospel love, to visit his Friends in the neighbouring meetings, both in Lancashire and Cheshire, and he took some longer journeys on the same account. In the year 1784, accompanied by his friend Martha Routh, of Manchester, he paid a religious visit to the families of Friends of Penketh Meeting, and immediately after to the families of Friends in Warrington: Rebecca Wright, from America, joining them in the visit, and Sarah Reynolds, of Penketh, to part of the families. From Warrington he proceeded to visit the families of Langtree and Ashton Meetings, Martha Routh and Sarah Reynolds continuing with him. In the discharge of this service, it appears, from information received, that he was much favoured.

In 1787, in company with his ancient and beloved friend Sarah Taylor, he visited the families of Friends belonging to Liverpool Meeting. In 1789, he united with Deborah

Darby and Rebecca Young in a similar visit to the families of Friends of Manchester Meeting.

In the 8th Month of 1792, died his highly valued friend Richard Shackleton, of Bal-litore, in Ireland, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, between whom, and the subject of this memoir, a near friendship and valuable correspondence had subsisted for several years, and to whom several letters in this volume are addressed.

RICHARD SHACKLETON was a man who possessed strong natural powers of understanding, improved by a liberal education, and these being sanctified and brought into subjection to the cross of Christ, he became qualified for distinguished usefulness in the church. He filled, for many years, the station of an Elder with great propriety, being eminently furnished, by his Divine Master, with wisdom and ability to communicate encouragement and counsel to such as stood in need. The sense which John Thorp had of the church's and his own loss, from the decease of his friend, appears by a letter which he addressed soon after that event to

Eliza Shackleton, and which, coming to the publisher's hands too late to be inserted in its proper place, may not unsuitably be introduced here :

8th Month, 1792.

In justice to thee and myself, I ought sooner to have acknowledged my gratitude for thy condescension, in writing to me the particulars of my dear friend thy father's decease. Looking at the church militant, his death is a loss to all but himself. I sympathize with you, I feel for the church, and regret my particular share in the general loss ; his company was to me exceedingly pleasant and lovely. I felt, almost at all times when with him, a more than common union with him ; but as a man and Christian, I loved him dearly.

I rejoice in that I was much favoured with his company. At our last Yearly Meeting, he condescended to go with me, or take me with him often, in the evenings. I prized the opportunities, and treasure up his remarks as the fruit of experience and mature judgment. I am thankful for the share he allowed me in his friendship ; for the instructive opportunities I have had of his conversation, and for the valuable letters I have received from him, by all which I desire to improve.

Give my dear love to thy mother ; it is likely her separation from him will be but of short duration. I have no doubt she will soon be with him in the kingdom of Divine joy. With regard to the deceased, doubtless, our

loss is his gain. I feel something like congratulation with him, as having arrived safe at the desired port, and entered into the fruition of the glorious reward of good labours. May a double portion of that Spirit which made him bright and useful, rest on all his children, that they may not only walk worthy of such a father, but of that high and holy vocation wherewith we are called, by our heavenly Father, to glory and virtue. To the guidance and protection of Israel's Shepherd, I recommend thee, and all thy father's house, desiring He may have you always in his keeping.

I am, with the salutation of love to thyself, thy family, and sisters, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.



In the 8th Month of 1793, John Thorp attended the funeral of his friend Frances Dodshon, who died at Macclesfield, and was there interred. About the 11th Month of this year, he visited the families of Friends in Manchester Meeting, having Martha Routh, before-mentioned, and also his friend Mary Robinson, a minister of the same meeting, as companions in the service.

About the close of the year 1797, in com-

pany with Martha Routh, he again visited the families belonging to his own meeting; and soon after, they performed a similar visit to the families of Morley Monthly Meeting.

In the 8th Month, 1802, he left home for London. Whilst there, he sat with Friends in all the meetings in the metropolis, and was at several of those in the neighbourhood. He returned home by Coventry, Warwick and Birmingham. This journey he mentions in a letter to Richard Reynolds, dated 12th Month 3d.

In the summer of 1806, he wholly declined business, having, through the good providence of God, a sufficiency for his future support. In the 8th Month of this year, he lost, in the sixty-first year of her age, his faithful and affectionate companion, to whom he had been united thirty-one years; she had been in a declining state of health for some months. This loss he very sensibly felt, and has feelingly described in a letter to Richard Reynolds, dated 8th Month 21, 1806.

In the year 1808, after attending the Year-

ly Meeting, he visited all the meetings in the metropolis, and several of those in the vicinity. He left London the 17th of 6th Month, arrived at Bristol the following day, and continued there until the 1st of 7th Month, attending meetings as they came in course. From Bristol he went to Worcester, where he was at the meetings on First day; and on the Third day following he went to Coalbrookdale; after attending several meetings at this place, he returned home, taking, in his way, the Monthly Meeting at Shrewsbury. In many of the meetings, on this journey, he was silent; but in others he was enabled, by his Lord and Master, to preach the gospel in the demonstration of the spirit, and with power, greatly to the comfort and rejoicing of many.

In the year 1812, he found his mind drawn, in gospel love, to unite with Priscilla Hannah Gurney and Susanna Naish, in a religious visit to the families of his own meeting. They had one hundred and nineteen sittings, and accomplished the work in twen-nine days. At the conclusion of this visit, he accompanied the same friends in a simi-

lar one to the Friends of Morley Monthly Meeting. The last service, of this kind, in which he was engaged, was with John Bottomly and Elizabeth Bludwick, in the year 1813, when he accompanied them to most of the families of his own meeting. He was then in his seventy-first year. Whilst ability of body was afforded, he continued in the practice of visiting the neighbouring meetings, as he felt himself drawn thereto by his Divine Master.

He was frequently invited to attend marriages and burials at a distance. At such times, he was careful to seek for Divine counsel, that he might be preserved from complying with, or declining such invitations in his own will. He has sometimes mentioned, to his intimate friends, his regret at what appeared to him an over earnestness, manifested by some, for the company of ministers on such occasions.

His powers of expression were strong and persuasive, and these being made subservient to his great Master's cause, he became, through the power of Divine love, eminently qualified affectionately to entreat others to

come to that Fountain of Mercy and saving help, by which he had been often refreshed and strengthened.

To those who, in their Christian pilgrimage, had to go mourning on their way, whose hands were often ready to hang down, he was many times a "son of consolation," encouraging them, in an animating manner, to keep hold of faith and patience, and still to hope that He, who had been their morning light, would be their evening song. But the subject that formed the most prominent and frequent exercise in his gospel labours, was closely to recommend to all, an earnest, serious, and impartial examination into the state of their own hearts, to see how their accounts stood with God; and to set forth, how great and irreparable would be the loss to those who unwisely neglect the opportunity afforded, of embracing the all-sufficient means appointed of God for their redemption.

He was often concerned, in his public communications, to turn the attention of his hearers from himself to the subject; and to direct them to look to God, instead of the

instruments, for instruction and help, for want of which he believed that many suffer much loss.

He was very exemplary in his movements in the ministry, and frequently, especially when at home, sat meetings in silence. He spent much time in retirement, a practice which he recommended to all religiously disposed persons. It was his practice, during a great part of his life, to take a walk, mostly alone, in the fore part of the day, generally into the fields. These walks, taken with much regularity, there is reason to believe, often proved seasons of religious exercise and devotion ; and some, who have casually met with him, have been struck with the solemnity of his countenance.

His reading had been extensive and various, and was to him a source of much satisfaction. In the former part of his life more especially, he read, with close attention, the writings of early Friends, and carefully informed himself of the creeds of the various religious professors ; but the writings which he read most frequently, (next to the Holy Scriptures, which he greatly preferred to all

other Books,) were those, by whomsoever written, which treated of religion, as being an individual, experimental work, consisting in obedience, and not in speculative knowledge or in mere profession. Yet, notwithstanding the satisfaction that reading afforded him, he was fully sensible, and often remarked, how little all the knowledge that can be obtained, even from the best of books, will avail those who neglect a reverent attention to the Divine law written in their own hearts. During the closing years of his life, he confined himself very much to the New Testament, and to a work well known amongst the Society of Friends, entitled "Piety Promoted."

He mixed but little with general society, and to strangers there was probably in his appearance, something like reserve; yet he had much pleasure in the company of his friends. In conversation, he united innocent cheerfulness with Christian gravity. Possessing a retentive memory, and a mind well stored with useful information; and having a peculiarly strong, clear, and apt mode of expressing his sentiments, his

company was very interesting. He had a particular enjoyment in the society of such as he believed to be his fellow-pilgrims in seeking a better country. With many of these, (and his view was very far from confining the number of them to the religious Society of which he was a member) he maintained an intercourse, of which there are living witnesses who can testify, that it was to them a source of blessing.

He frequently visited, as in a casual way, many of the Friends of his own meeting, and of other meetings in the neighbourhood. To these visits, he appears to have been often drawn by the influence of Divine love, as, in many of them, he was enabled, pertinently and impressively, to communicate much instructive counsel.

He was favoured with an excellent constitution of body, and with uninterrupted health, which continued, with but little alteration, until the autumn of 1815, when he was visited with a slight attack, apparently of the paralytic kind, which, in some degree, impaired his powers of body and mind; yet his understanding remained clear to the last,

and he continued to attend his own meeting as usual. He was able to walk about, and visit his friends, and his mind appeared to dwell in Divine love.

The last time he appeared in the ministry was in 1816, at a funeral which was attended by a considerable concourse of people. On this occasion he was, in a very feeling manner, enabled to call the attention of those present to the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of being prepared for death. At the grave side, he addressed the widow, who was left with a numerous young family, in the language of the prophet: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."

In the 9th Month, 1816, his beloved friend Richard Reynolds, of Bristol, departed this life, in the eighty-first year of his age. Of this distinguished philanthropist, the character is generally known; but as all may possibly not be acquainted with it, a short account of him may serve to elucidate some passages of those letters, in the following collection, which were addressed to him.

RICHARD REYNOLDS was, for many years, extensively engaged in the Iron trade, by which he very considerably increased his wealth. Under the influence of religious principle, he was sensible of his responsibility to Him, to whom belongeth "the earth, and the fulness thereof;" and his heart being enlarged in love to God, and good-will to men, it is believed that, after taking from his large income sufficient only for his own moderate establishment, he devoted the whole of the remainder to charitable purposes. His beneficence was guided by great wisdom, which rendered the benefit still more extensive. His benevolence raised the admiration of all who knew him; yet he was far from being elated by this circumstance, or by the possession of wealth; and in the distribution of his bounty, he frequently concealed the hand which sent the relief. He was a truly humble-minded Christian, and was often tried with a deep sense of spiritual poverty. He had also a very low view of the stewardship committed to him, which he, on one occasion, described to a friend in the following terms; "My talent is the

meanest of all talents, a little sordid dust ; but the man in the parable who had but one talent, was accountable, and for the talent that I possess, humble as it is, I also am accountable to the great Lord of all." This good steward was favoured to experience an increasing and well-grounded confidence in the mercy of God, through the ever-blessed Redeemer, which he thus expressed in a letter, written only a few days before his decease : " I have done with this world, and all my happiness in it is from the hope that I shall soon have it where there is neither sin nor sorrow ; and that hope rests entirely on the mercy of God, and the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ."

The end of this man was peace.



John Thorp survived the death of his friend Richard Reynolds about twelve months, during which period he frequently mentioned the prospect of his own dissolution. About a week before his decease, he was seized with a severe spasmodic affec-

tion. At this time, he manifested great composure of mind, saying that, whichever way it might terminate, all would be well.

The evening preceding his decease, he related to his family the following circumstance, which occurred in his youth, and which it is not known that he had ever before communicated ; indeed, he very rarely, even in his own family, or with his most intimate friends, made himself the subject of conversation : “ When a boy, about fourteen
 “ years of age, my attachment to music and
 “ singing was such, that when walking alone
 “ in the lanes and fields on an evening, I
 “ frequently gratified myself by singing a-
 “ loud ; and indulged therein, even after
 “ my mind became uneasy with the prac-
 “ tice, until, in one of my solitary evening
 “ walks, and when in the act of singing, I
 “ heard, as it were, a voice distinctly say,
 “ ‘ If thou wilt discontinue that gratification,
 “ ‘ thou shalt be made partaker of a much
 “ ‘ more perfect harmony.’ ” Such was the powerful and convincing effect of this solemn and awful communication, that, he added, he never afterwards indulged in the

practice. In relating this short and, to those about him, interesting anecdote of his early youth, he was, towards the latter part of it, considerably affected, and could not suppress his tears, which appeared as the tears of gratitude to God, at this remembrance of his very early merciful visitation.

After a short suspense of conversation, he related the circumstance of Luke Cock having been a great singer, prior to joining the Society of Friends ; and that John Richardson said of him, “ he was the greatest singer in that part of the country where he resided, and that he sung then the songs of “ Babylon, by the muddy waters thereof ; “ but having drunk deep of the brooks of “ Shiloh, which run softly into the newly “ converted soul, he could sing and rejoice “ in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Whilst communicating this anecdote, he continued much affected, and in tears, and his manner of relating it was most impressive and solemn.

He conversed cheerfully with his family during the remainder of the evening. The following day, being the 30th of the 9th

Month, 1817, about five o'clock in the afternoon, whilst sitting in his chair, he closed his eyes and quietly departed.

JOHN BRADSHAW.

MANCHESTER,

10th Month 31, 1820.

A TESTIMONY,

*From the Monthly Meeting of Hardshaw-East,
concerning John Thorp deceased.*

Our beloved friend John Thorp was born at Wilmslow, in the county of Chester, the 5th of the 11th Month, 1742, according to the N. S. His parents were in profession with the church of England. His father dying before he was born, the care of his education, with that of several other children, devolved on his mother, who, we have reason to believe, was a sober, well-minded woman, for whom he retained an affectionate and honourable esteem.

We have but little information respecting his conduct when a boy, except that, at a very early age, he became a singer in that called the parish church at his native place, an exercise which he was then strongly inclined to; but being soon after favoured with a visitation of "the day-spring from on high," he believed it to be required of him to relinquish this practice, in which he had taken great delight; and during a season of dis-

tress and mental retirement from the world, it pleased the Father of mercies, by the secret operation of his Divine Power, to open to his mind the nature and spirituality of the gospel dispensation; and to convince him that the saving knowledge of God is only to be attained by the immediate revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Some time after, he began to attend the meeting of Friends at Morley, about two miles distant from the place of his birth. This he did in a way to be as little observed as possible. There he found, publicly professed and advocated, the important doctrines which had been so clearly, and, as he has since declared, so immoveably impressed on his mind.

Continuing to attend the meetings of Friends, and feeling unity with them, he was, in the twentieth year of his age, admitted into membership. The following year he removed to London, where he continued to reside about four years, and, in the year 1767, he removed to Manchester, settled there, and not long after entered into the married state.

For some years after his admission into

our Society, he had to pass through much deep exercise and spiritual conflict, finding in himself, that he was opposed to that state of humble resignation which had been, by the Divine light, so clearly opened to his view, as necessary to be attained ; but, through the powerful and effectual operation of the grace of God, he was enabled to take up his cross, to follow Christ in the regeneration, and to experience a preparation for that work and service in the church whereunto he was appointed.

About the thirty-second year of his age, he appeared in the work of the ministry. He was naturally a man of strong mind, and a comprehensive understanding ; and being faithful to the gift received, he became an able and powerful minister of the gospel, reverently careful to wait for the renewed openings of the Word of Life ; so that we believe it may be truly said of him, that, when he ministered, he did it of the ability which God giveth, approving himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ; rightly dividing the word of truth ; faithfully warning the careless and worldly-

mindful of their danger ; encouraging the sincere and upright-hearted ; and, to the mourners in Zion, he was indeed a “ son of consolation ;” and, through the Divine blessing, his labours were made instrumental to the spiritual advantage of many.

His labours in the work of the ministry were mostly confined within the compass of his own Quarterly Meeting and his native country ; except that he several times attended the Yearly Meeting in London, and twice visited the meetings of Friends in the metropolis and its neighbourhood, the latter time, returning by way of Bristol. He several times visited the families of Friends in his own meeting, a service for which he was well qualified.

He was frequently concerned to testify, that the way to the kingdom of heaven, is the way of humility, of self-denial, and the cross ; the way which the Captain of our salvation hath trodden before us and sanctified. In this respect our beloved friend was an eminent example ; being early and deeply convinced of the danger of seeking for the treasures and possessions of this

world, he was content to remain in a comparatively low station. That he might not be unnecessarily encumbered with the cares of this life, and that he might be more at liberty for the service of his Divine Master, he steadily declined, at a time when he had an increasing family, the earnest and repeated solicitations of some of his near relations to enter into more extensive business ; yet he was favoured to experience the gracious promise of our blessed Lord fulfilled, that to those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things necessary shall be added.

He was greatly and generally beloved ; and among his more intimate friends, his natural cheerfulness, tempered with Christian gravity, his deep experience and sound judgment in Divine things, rendered his conversation peculiarly interesting, instructive, and edifying.

In the autumn of 1815, he was visited with a slight attack of the paralytic kind, by which his powers of body and mind were in some degree impaired ; yet he was diligent in attending his own meeting, and was much

pleased with the company of his friends, to whom his conversation continued to be interesting and edifying, clearly evincing his concern for the welfare of the church, and that his mind was centered in Divine Love.

About a week before his decease, he was seized with a severe spasmodic affection. At this time he manifested great composure of mind, saying that, whichever way it might terminate, all would be well. Continuing in a state of patient resignation, as one having done his day's work, and waiting for his Master's call, being supported by that faith and confidence in the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, which he so feelingly described sometime before in a letter to a friend, in which he expressed himself as follows: "At seasons, I feel a
 " degree of consolation and Divine peace
 " that cannot be expressed in words, which
 " I would not exchange for a thousand times
 " the treasures of both the Indies ; in comparison of which I should esteem, I do esteem, crowns and sceptres as dung and
 " dross. And at the much more frequent
 " seasons, when heavenly good is least sen-

“sibly felt, (I hope I write it with humble,
 “heart-felt gratitude,) my faith, and hope,
 “and confidence, are so firmly anchored on
 “the everlasting Rock, Christ Jesus, that
 “when the rains descend, and the winds and
 “the storms beat, I am not greatly moved.
 “I know Him in whom I have believed, and
 “that He will in mercy keep all those who
 “have committed themselves to him.”

The evening preceding his dissolution, he conversed cheerfully with his family, and mentioned that he thought it a great favour to be removed without much bodily suffering. The following day, being the 30th of the 9th Month, 1817, about five o'clock in the afternoon, whilst sitting in his chair, he closed his eyes, and gently stretching himself, quietly departed; and has, we have no doubt, joined that innumerable multitude which John beheld, who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. His remains were interred the 6th of the 10th Month following, in Friend's burial-ground at Manchester, after a large and solemn meeting held on the occasion. He was aged

about seventy-five, and a minister about forty-three years.

Given forth by the Meeting aforesaid, held at Manchester the First of the Fourth Month, 1818, and signed in and on behalf thereof, by

JOHN BLUDWICK,
JOHN KING,
JOHN BRADSHAW,
ROGER MERRICK,
THOMAS HOYLE, Jun.
MATTHEW CORBETT,
WILLIAM THORP,
JOHN BANCROFT,
JAMES HALL, Jun.
JOHN BURGESS,
WILLIAM FOWDEN,
JOHN BAGGS,
PETER TAYLOR,
BENJAMIN BINYON,
JOSEPH EVELEIGH,
JOSEPH CREWDSON,
SAMUEL FORSTER,
JOSEPH FELL,
ISAAC CREWDSON,
JOHN DAVIES,
JOHN H. COCKBANE,
W. G. ANSELL,

PETER CLARE,
JAMES HALL,
JOHN WADKIN,
JOHN WHITLOW,
JOSEPH FLINTOFF,
WILLIAM BOULTON,
JOHN BANCROFT, Jun.
JOHN GOODIER,
THOMAS CREWDSON,
WILSON CREWDSON,
JOHN WORTHINGTON,
JOHN BURTON,
ISAAC HODGSON,
RICHARD ODDIE,
JOHN WINDSOR,
JOSEPH ATKINSON,
JOHN THISTLETHWAITE,
JOHN WALTON,
MICH^l SATTERTHWAITE,
THOMAS FELLOWS,
DAVID DOCKRAY,

MARY ROBINSON,
ELIZABETH BLUDWICK,
ELIZABETH CREWDSON,
RACHEL CREWDSON,

MARTHA CLARE,
ELIZABETH GOODIER,
MARY CLARE,
MARY TAYLOR,

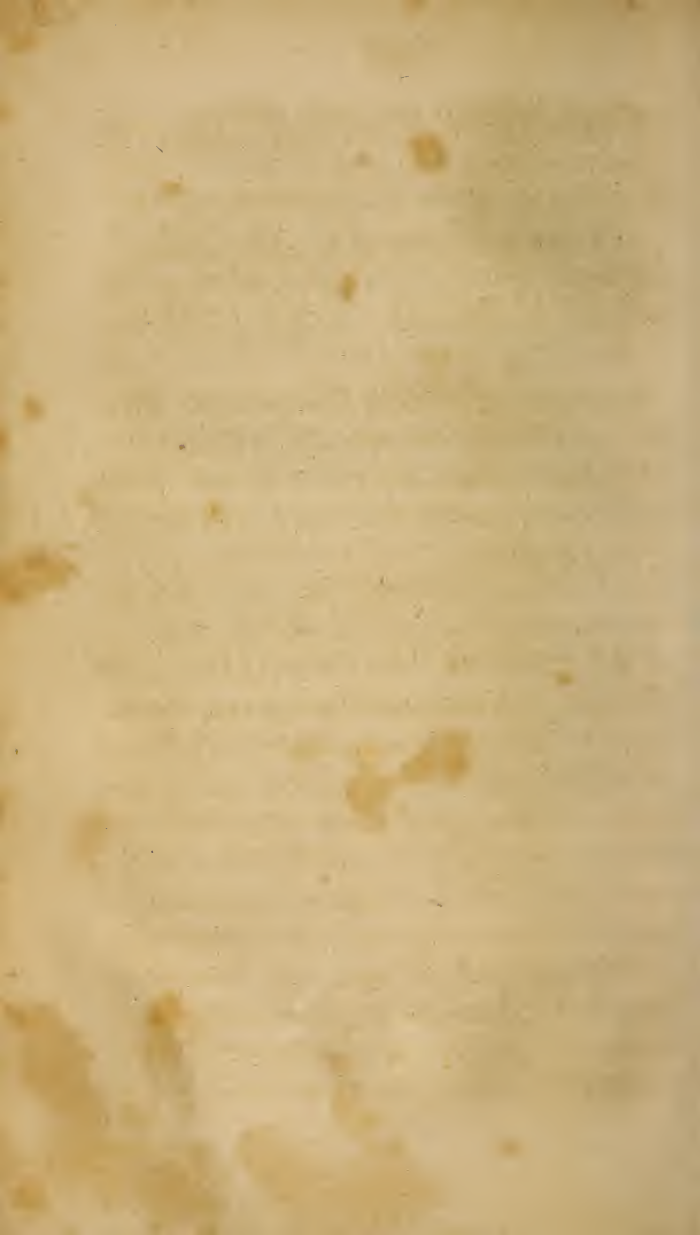
ABIGAIL DOCKRAY,
MARY ROGERS,
MARY MERRICK,
ALICE ATKINSON,
HANNAH WADKIN,
ANN SATTERTHWAITE,
MARTHA BOULTON,
ELIZABETH ATKINSON,
MARGARET FLINTOFF,

MARY KENDAL,
DEBORAH BINYON,
ALICE RYDER,
ELIZABETH BANCROFT,
ANN THISTLETHWAITE,
TABITHA EVELEIGH,
SARAH NEILD,
SUSANNA ROBINSON,
HANNAH BINYON.

Read and approved in our Quarterly Meeting for Lancashire, held at Manchester, the Second day of the Fourth Month, 1818, and in and on behalf thereof, signed by

GEORGE CROSFIELD, Jun. Clerk.

Signed on behalf of the Women's Meeting by
ELIZABETH CREWDSON, Clerk.



LETTERS, &c.

Letter H.

To JOHN CASH, (late of Coventry.)

Westminster, 10th Mo. 22, 1765.

Dear Friend,

WITH pleasure I received, read, and reviewed thy most welcome and long-expected letter. It is true, I see little in myself, and nothing of myself, sufficient to secure me a place in the memory of my friends; but yet there are some reasons, not known to all the professors of friendship, that suffer me not to conclude myself forgotten by those whose favour I esteem, though I receive not, so frequently as I could

wish, the evidences of their affectionate regard.

I very much approve of thy intention of marriage. May our blessed Lord, if He please, who so remarkably honoured the marriage in Cana of Galilee with His presence, vouchsafe His glorious attendance at the solemnization; and unite you to each other and to Him, in that love which survives faith and hope, and is coeval with eternity.

I am well pleased to hear of thy going into business for thyself; I hope it will answer thy end. If I recollect right, thou expressedst to me some diffidence of venturing into trade: truly it behoves us to be cautious in matters of importance; but then, when we act our part to the best of our understanding, it becomes us not (as Christians) to despond.

Let us remember, dear John, they that trust in the Lord need fear no want; for He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" and ought we not to rest satisfied in the most sure promise of Him who is faithful? "Seek ye first the kingdom of

God, and His righteousness, and all things [necessary] shall be added unto you." He that feedeth the ravens, and clothes the lilies ; without whose approbation a sparrow shall not fall, will not fail, if our trust is in Him, to extend a paternal, providential care over us, who are more considerable (though we be nothing) than the grass of the field, or the fowls of the air, and of more value than many sparrows.

I am obliged to thee for conveying my mother's love, from whom I am glad by every opportunity to hear. It gives me satisfaction to hear that friends at —— are generally well, but I am really sorry there should be any successors of the Laodicean church amongst them ; such a disposition of luke-warmness must, and will for ever, be productive of barrenness, of nakedness, of poverty and want. Oh ! what can be done or said, to alarm the indolent religious professors, who seem dead to their best reason and truest interest ; insensible of the blessings and glory of heaven, and deaf to His most glorious voice, who hath so long multiplied His calls in mercy, and waited to be

gracious to them. Well! well! if such do not in time (and the present is only theirs) rouse themselves from their beds of ease, be zealous and repent, they may remember that He, whose word shall never go forth in vain, hath already pronounced "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion," and said to the lukewarm, "I will spew thee out of my mouth."

I am entirely of thy opinion with regard to ———, and abundantly convinced that our sentiments are just. Alas! alas! flesh and blood would fain pray, though it cannot wait; and be a saint, though it cannot abide the will of God.

I do not know that I have any thing more to add, and perhaps I have trespassed too much on thy patience already; so for this time conclude, and subscribe myself thy most loving and affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter II.

To JOHN CASH.

Westminster, 5th Mo. 26, 1766.

My dear Friend,

With regard to that part of thy last letter which respects thy external situation and circumstances, I have little to reply, because I have no doubt but in those things all will be well. A due attention to the established maxims of frugality and industry, through the blessing of Providence, will hardly fail of procuring all that can be thought necessary by those who, like good old Jacob, can be content with food to eat and raiment to put on. To the other part, which I count the best, in which I am more nearly concerned, and much more interested, I thought I should have answered more particularly; but I feel myself rather mistaken, for truly I find very little to say; and to force myself, like Saul, and offer unrequested, would at best prove but an unprofitable folly.

Are not men, the best of men, to be compared with reeds shaken with the wind, and

clouds which cannot fill themselves? who of themselves can do nothing for themselves, much less for others. But He, to whom the work of man's salvation belongeth, hath both wisdom and power to carry it on, and will carry it on unto the end, wherever it is begun, if we are but enough resigned, and interrupt it not. But various are the courses of His operation, and various the dispensations of His gracious providence, and oftentimes inscrutable to us. David experienced many conditions, between the sheep-fold and the throne; and was ready to cry out, when tottering on the verge of despondency, "I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul:" but David's God, the God who chose him from amongst his brethren, and called him to execute all His will, though He suffered him to be tried, yea and often distressed too, yet He never did forsake him; but in His own good time, which ever is the best time, established him on the throne of Israel, and gave him rest from all his enemies. A word to the wise may suffice, and I would not darken counsel by multiplying words without knowledge.

JOHN THORP.

Letter III.

To JOHN CASH.

Westminster, 4th Mo. 11, 1767.

My dear Friend,

This week, as I looked over the contents of thy letter to me, I felt a sensible sympathy and affection, which engaged me to propose addressing to thee a few lines ; but truly, now I consider on what occasion, and to whom I am writing, I am almost persuaded that my labour might be spared, being assured thou art not destitute of a Comforter and Counsellor, that never faileth. What then remaineth, but that I may, pursuant to the example of the apostle, endeavour to stir up the pure mind, by putting thee in remembrance of those things which inevitably bow the heart to the dispensations of Heaven, and inspire the mind with the language of holy Job, " The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord ; " and as Eli hath expressed it, " It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good ? "

Sensibly my friend, hast thou put the inter-

rogation, why should we murmur? Surely it is our business to be resigned; we ought, indeed, humbly to acquiesce, entirely to concede, aye, and wait to say amen, to every dispensation of the Divine Providence towards us, both in our temporal and spiritual affairs; and by this Christian conduct through the various vicissitudes of life, every dispensation would be sanctified unto us. Why then should we murmur? Who shall say unto God, what dost thou? Are not His judgments unsearchable, and his ways past finding out? How do we know for what good cause Infinite Wisdom might see meet to select and separate, to take from the earth and receive into heaven, to involve in sorrow for a moment, or crown with everlasting joy, whom, when, and where, and how He pleases?

This we know, (and I think there is a great deal of comfort in it,) that whatsoever our most gracious Father does, is indubitably right; and know, dear friend, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Let us then, I pray thee, in every probation, in every trial and trouble,

that Infinite Wisdom may see meet should attend us in our probationary progress through this vale of tears, where truly we have no continuing city ; let us, pursuant to the example of the holy Jesus, submit ourselves to the will of God, saying, “ if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.”

I might add much, but rather choose to conclude, which I will do by earnestly recommending thee for comfort and counsel, where I infallibly know both are for ever to be received, even to him who is called the Comforter, the everlasting Counsellor, in whom is all safety and everlasting consolation.

I am, dear friend, with the sincerest affection and esteem, thine, &c.

JOHN THORP.

Letter IV.**To JOHN CASH.****Manchester, 1st Mo. 13, 1768.**

Dear Friend,

The last letter I had from thee is with the rest of my things at London; the contents and sentiments I retain, which I thought both sorrowful and very Christain. Indeed, dear friend, it certainly becomes us, (I have often thought so,) as we can do nothing of ourselves, to rest entirely resigned to the will of God, not only in the dispensations of His providence in things without us, but also in the deep proving baptisms of the mind and spirit within us.

Our blessed Lord, in all these things, hath left us an example in suffering and doing, and in humility and obedience unto death; it is He, who is the Truth itself, who hath told us, that "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it" unto life eternal. "No man," saith He, "having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of

God ;” neither is there a possibility of our serving two masters: we cannot be heirs of two kingdoms, nor at once dedicate ourselves to God and to the world. The Lord will not accept a partial offering. “Choose you this day,” said Joshua to Israel, “whom ye will serve ;” and then, according to the advice of David, let us “serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.” “If any man will come after Me,” said the blessed Jesus, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

Dear friend, though I had no particular engagement, yet, I think, in abundance of good-will, I had freedom to say thus much, being, at least part of it, what hath been frequently impressed on my mind with invincible conviction, to wit, the necessity of being altogether redeemed from the world, and all that is in the world, in order that we might follow our blessed Lord in the regeneration. This, with my love, is all at present from thy real friend,

JOHN THORP.

P. S.—I should be glad to hear from thee

when thou hast freedom. I would not that we should forget one another, especially when we are most sensible of good.

Letter V.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

Manchester, 5th Mo. 10, 1775.

My Dear Friend,

Feeling some degree of liberty, and the spring of good-will opened, I take this opportunity to assure thee of the unfeigned regard which I feel for thee, and for thy preservation and further growth and establishment in the blessed truth; and that thou mightst be happily enabled and disposed to watch and keep thy garments, that so neither heighths nor depths, nor things present nor to come, might be permitted to beguile thee of thy reward, or separate thee from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; and, indeed, I have an evidence of the sincerity of thy heart, and uprightness of thy disposition, to bear, to do, and to suffer all things, and

to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. "Lord," said Peter, "I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." Peter was full of zeal, and he loved more than his fellows; but, alas! when the time of trial came, he was not able to bear those abasing seasons of humiliation and baptism unto suffering and death, which, in the course of Divine Wisdom and Counsel, were appointed to our Holy Leader; and to all such, in a certain degree, who will follow him in the regeneration.

"Let this mind be in you," saith the apostle, "which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."

Now, that which seems most in my view, and which I do most deeply and frequently,

both for myself and thee wish, is, that we might patiently, and with resigned, devoted hearts, receive and submit to every dispensation of Divine Providence, however they may be directed to reduce, to humble, and to abase: if they lead again into Jordan, that so our flesh may become as the flesh of a little child, or into the furnace, that so the dross may be thoroughly purged from the silver, let us endure them; and when the dross is purged from the silver, "there shall come forth a vessel for the Finer." Oh that we might patiently, willingly, and passively endure every preparative operation, every mercifully renewed turning of His holy hand; that so self might indeed become of no reputation, and we, according to His holy purpose, be formed vessels to His praise.

JOHN THORP.

Letter VI.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

12th Mo. 12, 1776.

Dear Friend,

In some degree of that love, wherein the living have a fellowship which neither time, distance, nor death, can interrupt or dissolve ; wherein such a union and sympathy is experienced, that at times we cannot help rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep : in the renewed movings of this love and life, hast thou of late often been brought to my remembrance ; at which times there have been raised and presented to my mind some remarks and observations, which I think I have at least liberty to offer to thy consideration.

When that frequently deeply-humbled and tried servant of the Lord, the royal psalmist, was favoured with the renewed streams of that river, whose source is Everlasting Love, whereby the whole heritage of God is at times watered and made glad ; when his feet were set on a Rock that was higher than he,

and the new song was put into his mouth ; at these seasons he thought that his mountain stood strong, and said, in his prosperity, he should never be moved ; yet, afterwards, the Lord saw meet to permit that he should be so far tried, that he concluded himself forsaken, and in this humble, plaintive language, queries, “ Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will He be favourable no more ? Is His mercy clean gone forever ? doth His promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies ? ” Having thus, in the heights and in the depths, experienced preservation and deliverance, this righteous man was instructed to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling ; and having witnessed the sufficiency of the Almighty arm, so repeatedly stretched out for his deliverance and protection, he was enabled to say, “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me. ” And therefore, when the Lord saw meet to hide His face from him, and suffer fresh probations to attend him, we find him availing himself of

that mercy he had so often experienced ; and though he felt deeply at times, and was greatly dejected, yet his faith was so strengthened in Him who had raised him from the sheepcot to be His servant, (and though his house was not so with God, yet He had made with him an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure,) that he could thus address himself in times of deep probation : “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? Hope thou in God ; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.”

Alas ! why should that wholesome discipline, which consummate Wisdom hath ever exercised upon those whom He hath made willing to bear every refining operation and turning of His holy hand, seem strange to any of us ? Gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity ; and indeed, if “ it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings ;” if He was “ a man of sorrows

and acquainted with grief," is it not "enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord?"

There are various causes of suffering; there are various baptisms, buffetings, and trials; our different conditions require a different discipline, and the different designs of God upon us require, or make it necessary for us, to be brought under different operations. All the faithful in the several generations wherein the prophets lived, were not brought under those particular, and (for the present) grievous exercises which the prophets were, in order to prepare them for the work whereunto they were called, unto which many learned obedience by the things which they suffered.

It is true, the judgments of the Lord are many times unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. "Who," saith the apostle, "hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" secret things belong to Him; but things which are revealed, to us and to our children. But if all the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors of Jesus, have, like their

blessed Lord, been men of sorrows and acquainted with grief and entered the kingdom through many tribulations ; can we doubt whether the particular trials, siftings, and probations, which God only wise permitted or appointed unto them, were not, to every one of these to whom he appointed them, mercies, mercies, mercies in disguise ? Were they not made a means of preservation in His fear, made a means of bringing them nearer to Him, to trust more firmly in, and to rely more entirely upon Him, the only refuge of the righteous in times of trouble ? Have not all the afflictions of the righteous been thus sanctified ? and will not the endless hallelujah, which these shall have to sing, be unto Him who hath redeemed their souls out of all adversity, and made their garments white in the blood of the Lamb ?

Many now, as well as formerly, are the afflictions of the righteous, and from different causes, different in their nature, and different in their degree ; but, though hid from mortals, they are all known to God, who careth for them, by whom the very hairs of their head are all numbered, and not one of

them shall fall without Him. Their sighs are all numbered by Him, and their tears are all sealed up in His bottle; why then should Sion say, or why should the watchers on her walls say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me? can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget," saith the Lord, "yet will I not forget thee: behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." No, verily, "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." However unmindful He may seem to be of the distress and danger which threaten them, when the tempest arises, and the enemy breaketh in as a flood, yet in His own time, and that surely is the best time, will He arise, and rebuke both the wind and the waves, and the enemy, for their sakes; and by the effective word of His power, who speaketh and it is done, once more say, "Peace, be still."

But should it seem best to Him, who is wonderful in counsel, and doeth all things

right, to lead any in the line of the glorious process of His dear Son; should the hour and power of darkness be extended to the latest moments; should the final cup and baptism be the most trying and most bitter; should our dying words, under these painful feelings, be expressed in that most moving language of the Son of God, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," I should have no more doubt of the righteous soul thus tried, ascending from this cross, and apparent dereliction, to an immortal crown of righteousness and mansion of eternal glory; no more doubt of these, than if I saw them ascending in the fiery chariots of sensible, celestial, soul-rejoicing fervours.

I know not how sufficiently to inculcate this most certain truth, that the children of God are never more under His notice and most tender regard, than in the seasons of their deepest humiliations; never is He more intimately present with us, preparing and supporting under every operation, and directing, blessing, and sanctifying every dispensation, to willing, humbled and subjected souls. Thus is He carrying on His own work,

though we see it not. Oh that thou mightst not be discouraged, nor sink under the present exercise! nor murmur as some of old murmured; nor think the Lord delayeth His coming: but endeavour, all in thy power, to centre in perfect resignation to the will of God; and then, assuredly, all things will work together for thy good, and for thy additional preparation to glorify His holy name, in time and in eternity. Amen.

From thy real, respectful friend,

JOHN THORP.

P. S. I do not forget, my honoured friend, to whom I am writing, nor my own infancy and weakness. It is with a feeling deference that I address to thee this feeble offering; but as I said, I thought I felt at least a liberty, and if the Lord be mercifully pleased, so to bless it, that the pure mind be thereby stirred up ever so little, His name be praised; but if I wrote ever so much, I should fall short of expressing to the full, the equal desire and faith which I feel, that thou mayst, and that thou wilt, in the Lord's own time, which thou art waiting for, yet have

to sing for joy of heart as in the days of thy youth, as in the days when thou wast brought forth out of the land of spiritual Egypt.

Letter VII.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

7th Mo. 17, 1777.

My dear and much esteemed Friend,

Although I am persuaded, and have considered it, that thou hast seen, and felt, and attained, beyond many of us, and art much better capable of communicating thy experience; yet I do not apprehend myself thereby excused from casting my mite into thy treasury of divine knowledge, though thereby I may expose my own poverty.

The letter which thou condescendedst to write me, came duly to hand; and since that time, and indeed ever since thou wast here, though my own concerns have been somewhat grievous, and demanded both my solicitude and attention, yet hast thou been often brought to my remembrance in much nearness; yet so continual and invariable is

the sense and judgment with which my mind hath been impressed concerning thee, that the dispensation which thou art under is the effect of consummate Love and Wisdom, that the everlasting arms of Strength and Mercy are underneath for thy support, that the all-conquering, invincible Redeemer continueth his available intercession with the Father on thy behalf, that thy faith may be strengthened, continue and increase,—that my greatest concern and uniform prayer, in union with the Divine Will, is, that thy present painful baptism may be blessed and sanctified to the benefit and edification of the churches, the glory of the everlasting God, and (as I also believe it will be) to thy own sanctification and salvation. For these ineffably glorious purposes, what can be too much to do, to bear, or suffer, according to the will of God? It was for them that Jesus Christ our Lord vouchsafed to descend from the heights of immortality, and take upon Him the form of a servant, to bear the contradiction of sinners, the temptations of the enemy, and to offer up Himself upon the cross, an everlasting sacrifice to God for the

sins of the whole world. It was for this, that He, who alone was able, vouchsafed to tread the wine-press alone, to stain all his garments, to drink "the dregs of the cup of trembling," and be baptized with the baptism of suffering unto death! And O! that all of us, who are desirous to be found in Him, may be at least contended so to walk even as he walked, in the depths of abasement, humiliation and suffering, in the different frequency and degrees wherein He may be pleased to lead, until he say for us, as for Himself, "It is finished."

Strait and narrow hath the way to the kingdom ever been; attended with difficulties, accompanied with crosses, and entered through many tribulations. Yet are not the commandments of the Lord grievous; yet is there great delight in the keeping of His law; yet is there a recompense a thousand fold, even in this life, for all our sufferings, in the recurrent participation and enjoyment of that peace "which passeth all understanding," in the earnest of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," with which all our sufferings in this life are not worthy to be compared.

“Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness,” altogether surpassing human comprehension; and those parts of that mystery in which we are most deeply interested, we can only see into and understand, as He, who hath the key of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is pleased to loose the seals and open unto us. How necessary then is it for us to take heed to the advice of the apostle Paul, “Judge nothing before the time ; yea,” said this Apostle, “I judge not mine own self.”

Our duty, our interest, our advancement in the divine life, consist not in our comprehending in theory, but following in obedience, and in the simplicity of little children. Be not then, my dear friend, over anxious about the cause, the duration, or effects of thy present humiliation ; but endeavour to cast all thy care upon Him who careth for thee, to put thy whole trust in Him, in whom is everlasting strength, without whose approbation a hair of thy head shall not perish. Blessing and glory, and honour be to Him, whom the Father hath appointed an everlasting and holy High-priest over the house

of God; for such a one indeed became us, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He sees, He marks every circumstance, every peculiarity of thy mournful condition, when the enemy may be permitted to sift and to buffet thee, and thou art "tossed with tempest, and not comforted." He sees these things, He knows these things, whose vigilance nothing can elude, whose power is omnipotent, who hath set bars and doors to the sea, and ascertained the point whereto its proudest waves shall rise and go no further. But thou knowest these things, and, I am persuaded, art disposed and endeavouring to do them; yet suffer me to express it, as it is in my heart to encourage thy perseverance in a total resignation of thyself to the disposal of Almighty power and Goodness, that God only is wise, that He "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;" that His judgments are true and righteous, that His ways are just and equal; that He "will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" but, in the time appointed, will surely give unto thee "beauty for ashes," and "the oil of joy

for mourning:" and though thou mayst seem to thyself to lie as amongst the pots, and esteem thyself as a broken vessel, yet it is my invariable persuasion, thou shalt again be brought forth as the dove, whose wings are covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

Assuredly, my friend, if it would avail any thing to thy comfort, thou art very far from being alone in tribulation. I speak not of outward troubles; they, indeed, are light afflictions, and they are but for a moment; but of those which result from the spiritual warfare, wherein we wrestle not with flesh and blood only, nor our own concern as individuals; the impending judgments of the Lord on a backsliding generation, and the general state of the churches amongst ourselves, wherein the obvious, painful prevalence of the nature and spirit of the world, the famine of that Word whose entrance giveth life, furnish abundant cause to the living for mourning, for sackcloth, for unspeakable distress! Nevertheless, we are at seasons favoured to behold, in the vision of Divine Light, a prospect into better times;

wherein the Lord will in mercy “turn again our captivity as the streams in the south;” times wherein the Lord will more eminently appear to be with us, and the shout of a mighty King be heard amongst us; who will again make “His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.”

Thus is my faith as an individual, though, I trust, in concert with many others, strengthened to believe, that the time will come, when the gospel shall be preached in all nations, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; that “from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same,” His “name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place, incense shall be offered unto his name, and a pure offering.” Thus shall the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, thus shall the whole earth be filled with His glory; then shall the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy.

Upon the whole, I cannot forbear to add, that I wish myself more worthy of the sufferings of the present day; more worthy to partake in the glory that shall follow; and

that I was more worthy to express these things in this manner to one so far above me.

My wife joins, in dear love to thyself and husband, with me; and at this time, in confirmed faith and fresh desires for thy preservation and deliverance in the will of God, I conclude, and subscribe myself thy brother in Christ Jesus,

JOHN THORP.

Letter VIII.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

8th Mo. 23, 1778.

My dear Friend,

Although I have a particular value for thee, and count myself favoured by thy correspondence; yet conscious what I am, and indeed what all instruments are, and what they are but; and knowing that all good comes from the one Fountain of Good, and is never so effectually administered as when the living springs from thence are immediately opened in the soul, whereby I have

desired thou mightest be supplied with every degree of wisdom and patience, strength and consolation, which God only wise sees meet to vouchsafe unto thee; so that I was willing to decline writing, until I felt my mind impressed with some degree of necessity; and truly I may tell thee, that I feel much sympathy and concern for thee in thy present suffering state, yet ever attended with an indubitable evidence that all things will work together for thy good; and that, when the Lord shall see meet to say, "It is enough," thy soul shall be set at liberty, and filled forever with His praise.

The Lord's ways are not our ways, His thoughts are not our thoughts; one day with Him is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The depths, the designs, the concealed mercy in His varied dispensations, when His way is in the thick darkness, are beyond our comprehension; but this we know, that with Him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" that having loved His own, He loveth them to the end; that through whatsoever sufferings, tribulations, or conflicts, He may be

pleased to lead His chosen ones, that it is His good pleasure to give them the kingdom ; that He is greater than all, and none shall be able to pluck them out of His hand.

Be not then, my dear friend, discouraged, when the enemy may be permitted to sift and to buffet thee ; endeavour to stand still in these times of trial, and in the Lord's time He will lift up an effectual standard against him, and cause thee afresh to experience His complete salvation. Deeply have the most dignified of all the children of God often been tried ; often led in paths of unutterable humiliation and abasement, in the course of their purification ; yet were none that ever trusted in the Lord, and abode in His fear, confounded or forsaken. Whom hath He ever prepared for a habitation with Him in glory, who have not measureably drunk of this cup, and been baptized with this baptism ? “ I am a worm, and no man ; ” I have not the spirit of a man ; “ I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind ; I am like a broken vessel,” is a language in which all the redeemed of our God have been more or less instructed. “ Are ye able

to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" was the very query proposed by our blessed Lord to the two disciples, who were emulous of a situation at His right and left hand in glory. Now what was this cup, and what was this baptism? it was a cup of ineffable, agonizing distress, and baptism into the deepest suffering and death; the depth and nature whereof are awfully set forth in that solemn expostulation, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" This was the baptism through which the holy Jesus had to pass, and with which he was straitened until it was accomplished. This was the cup which, though intolerable to human nature, He was desirous to drink, according to the will of God: "Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." This is the acceptable state; this was the mind that was in Christ, concerning whom it is written in the volume of the book, "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God," and not his own. Oh the perfection of this state! wherein no choice is formed, no desire arises, no prayers are offered up, but

what are circumscribed by, and centre in, “not my will, but thine be done.” It is to reduce us to, or rather, raise us into this state, that all the varied turnings of His holy hand and the dispensations of His providence, are directed; and then, in this state, whether we are called to unite in the hosanna to our adorable Redeemer, or go with Him over the brook Cedron, and with Him sweat great drops of sorrow, we are equally acceptable unto Him. It is to this state all things are equally sanctified, whether it be to reign or to suffer with Him; whether the north or the south wind blows upon it, the spices equally flow out, and ascend as incense, equally acceptable unto the God of heaven and of the whole earth.

Be not then dismayed; give not way to slavish fear, attend not to the discouragements the enemy would cast before thee; for, I believe thou wast never more under the Divine notice, nor more acceptable to Him, than in this very season; and so sure as the records of heaven do not fail, so sure is thy name written there, never, never to be erased. Though thou feel not the uniform

prevalence of that Power, unto which the devils are subject, in the degree thou hast formerly done, "Yet in this rejoice," said our holy Redeemer, "that your names are written in heaven:" and though thy present state, according to thy own sensibility of it, be a painful, dark, oppressed, imprisoned state, yet permit me to say, fear not, the Lord is on thy side, encamped round about thee; "greater is He that is in thee, than he that is in the world;" and, in His own time, He will open the prison doors; He will relieve the oppressed, and "say to the prisoners, Go forth, to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves;" and thy feeding shall again be in the ways, and thy pastures in all high places.

How canst thou think, my dear friend, at any time, that thou art finally forsaken or forgotten of God, though in unsearchable wisdom, He sees meet to hide His face, at seasons, from thee? Is God unrighteous? do His compassions ever fail? are not his promises sure? and doth He not strictly keep covenant? Hath He not delivered out of six troubles, and is His arm shortened? Hath

He vouchsafed, in unutterable love, to draw thy soul after Him in infant years, and to reveal himself unto thee, to be the stay of thy youth, the God of thy life, and will He now forsake thee? No; glory to His name, it is not so; He is the same He ever was, when thy soul was first ravished with Him, and He became to thee "the chiefest among ten thousand." His regard, his love, the yearning of His bowels, are as much as ever towards thee; and, as He hath vouchsafed to be thy morning light, and the stay of thy youth, so will he be thy evening song, and the staff of thy old age. Endeavour then, my dear friend, to cast out all discouragements and painful doubtings, and let thy hope, thy trust, thy only expectation be from Him; and though thou mayst seem cast out from His sight, yet, let thy looking be towards His holy temple; and in His own time He will give thee the desire of thy heart, and thou shalt yet praise Him on the banks of deliverance, and tell of His wonders in the deep, who is a God, infinite in power, wisdom and love; whose "mercy endureth forever," and of whose loving kindness there is no end.

I desire the increase and establishment of thy health, and in order to it, I wish thee to take as much exercise, within and without doors, as thou art capable of without weariness ; and let nothing prevail, to induce thee to deny thyself of any quantity or quality of food that may best nourish and sustain thy body.

I am, with much affection, real regard, and love unfeigned, thy friend in the fellowship of gospel love,

JOHN THORP.

Letter IX.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

Manchester, 6th Mo. 17, 1779.

My dear Friend,

I cannot with ease omit this opportunity of communicating a few lines to thee, to acknowledge the receipt of thy letter ; and be assured, no want of true friendship for thee, nor inattention to the subject, has been the cause why I have not answered it sooner ;

but chiefly because I have nothing to say, which has not in substance at least been already said. My faith and hope, and all my feelings concerning thee, when clothed with a right mind, being invariably the same; and because I am abundantly persuaded, that however, in thy own apprehension, thou mayst seem to stand in need of compassion and help from the least of the flock, yet I know that He, who made and supports all worlds, and all beings; with whom not only all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are, but also all power in heaven and on earth, is thy Shepherd, thy Saviour, thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

With regard to the distressing probations of thy present state, I have only to say, I pray in faith that thou mayst be supported under and to the end of them all; that the gracious design of the Almighty may be fully answered concerning thee. What I feel at any time of concern for thee, is on account of thy present suffering; for I have no fear or doubt at all with respect to the issue of thy present conflicts. Nay, verily, when I have read over thy letters, those which have

been most replete with lamentation and fear, so far have I been from feeling any degree of discouragement on thy account, that my faith has often been raised to a degree of assurance, that there was no one in a safer state. "My Father is greater than all," said the adorable Jesus, concerning those whom the Father had drawn unto and given Him, "and none can pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Is the cause of thy present suffering a painful uncertainty whether it originateth in mind or body; whether on thy own account as an evil-doer, or in a state of union with the holy, suffering seed, filling up what remains of the afflictions of Christ, for His body's sake, which is the church? whether purely a dispensation from the Almighty, for thy more perfect purification, or the weight of His judgments for former offences? or whether arising only from natural causes in the constitution of the human frame? is the clear, distinct knowledge of these things at all veiled or hid from thyself or others? why is it so? Doth not Infinite Wisdom know it, and cannot He reveal it? What is the rea-

son, then, why He doth not do it? why, surely, because it is best it should be concealed, just in the manner and degree it is. O that thou couldst but cast, without intermission, all caring and anxious solicitude, concerning these things, upon Him who careth for thee; and think of nothing but the most perfect submission and resignation to the will of God, whether in suffering or reigning with Him. . Now, I verily believe this is thy desire and concern, and therefore I am persuaded that, however thy trial may be permitted to continue or increase; though the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it ever yet hath been, yet shalt thou be brought forth but with so much greater purity, without so much as the smell of fire having passed on thy garments.

Oh the unspeakable safety of this resigned, humble, trusting, depending state! and truly the fitness and necessity of it, are equal to its safety: for what are we, and what have we to boast of but our abundant infirmities? Beset then as we are, in this state of probation, from within and from without, what can the willings and runnings of the crea-

ture avail? or what have we to trust in, to rely or depend upon, but upon God who showeth mercy? and that mercy is CHRIST JESUS. I commend thee then, with myself, my dear friend, into the arms of this Everlasting Mercy, for safety, keeping, and preservation; for He is, (thou hast hitherto experienced it to be so, and thou wilt do to the end,) that salvation which God hath appointed "for walls and bulwarks;" and the more thou art weakened and reduced, as to thy own strength, the more will His strength be magnified in thy salvation. And I have to believe, and liberty to express it, that the more thou art emptied and humbled, the more abundantly thou shalt be filled with His glory and presence, who is thy life. The deeper thou descendest into suffering and humiliation, the higher shalt thou rise in dominion, with thy suffering, glorified Redeemer; for, as said the apostle, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

It is in my heart therefore to say, Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, let thy wants be made

known unto God ; cast all thy care upon Him, both with regard to soul and body, time and eternity, and He will be every thing to thee thou standest in need of, according to the riches of His mercy in Christ Jesus. And, indeed, I see it clearly with an eye of faith, that the Lord, the glorious Lord, both is and will be unto thee, wisdom, righteousness, and strength ; thy sword, thy bow, thy battle-axe, thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. I know He is on thy side, encamped round about thee ; “ and though a thousand fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand,” thou shalt be preserved as Mount Sion that cannot be moved. My soul is exceedingly humbled, in thankfulness to the God of all grace, for that, in adorable condescension, He hath vouchsafed to fill my heart at this time, for thy sake no doubt, with such a degree of faith and hope concerning thee, as I am not able to express ;—thanksgiving and praise be to Him therefore.

It has several times struck my mind, whilst I have been writing, and a degree of sympathy has been raised in my heart with thee, that thy present humiliation, and compara-

tive uselessness in thy own apprehension, in respect of former service, affect thee with a generous concern, on the church's account, wherein, to be sure, the number of upright labourers is small ; but know, my dear friend, nay, thou dost know it, that the work and the power too are the Lord's ; that He can work by many or by few, with or without instruments ; and I believe He will work marvelously, and by His power carry on His work, and none shall let it. To Him, therefore, let us commit his own cause, desiring, willing, choosing nothing for ourselves, but that His will may be done in us and by us, as it is done in heaven.

I have only to add, that I would have thee in any wise comply with whatever thou thinkest may conduce to thy bodily health, in meet, drink, sleep, and exercise : to do any thing to injure our health, or shorten our lives, is certainly a fault. The blessing of natural life and health, deserves our gratitude and attention ; and I believe it equally offensive to defile or to destroy.

I desire to be remembered by thee. It is always pleasing to me to hear from thee.

Give my love to thy husband, in which my wife joins, and to thyself.

In the unfeigned fellowship of the gospel, I conclude at this time, and subscribe myself, thy loving and affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

P. S.—Thou hast no occasion to fear my being offended at thy having suffered some of my letters to be seen ; it is perfectly nothing to me.

Letter X.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

Manchester, 4th Mo. 16, 1780.

My dear Friend,

It might seem somewhat inconsistent with that friendship which I have often, and with much sincerity, professed for thee, (and which in truth I do constantly possess,) that I have been so long in acknowledging the receipt of thy letter, which, as all thine are, was a welcome one to me ; but thou, my

friend, hast been better instructed, wherein the best fellowship consisteth,—not in words, but is beyond them, and standeth on that Foundation which will endure for ever. But the truth is, I had nothing which I believed it to be my business to communicate; at which, indeed, I do not wonder, believing the best of Counsellors, on whom all sure help is laid, to be often near thee; and thou knowest, the more our eye and attention are steadily unto Him, and our only expectation is from Him, the more we are in the way of receiving that help which cometh from Him; and this, thou knowest, is without exception, whatever be our state. To be preserved in faith, in patience, in humility and resignation of mind, in heights, in depths, in the night and in the day, is what I most earnestly desire on my own account; and I believe it to be the happy exercise (and, in good degree, the blessed experience) of my much esteemed friend.

I desire my love to thy husband, whose kindness towards thee, and sympathy with thee, and (according to his measure) bearing a part of thy burden, will, I have no doubt,

like the prayers and alms of Cornelius, go up as a memorial before God.

In a measure of that love, and desire for its increase, which believeth, hopeth, and endureth all things, wherein consisteth the communion of saints, and the resurrection from the dead, I conclude at this time ; thy truly affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XI.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

Manchester, 11th Mo. 5, 1780.

My dear Friend,

My mind is frequently so shut up in meetings, and after them too, (and my mouth of course,) through the absence of Divine Light, at least as to the sensible feeling and enjoyment of it in dominion, that I seem to myself often unfit to speak or write any thing on religious subjects ; yet, whether in suffering or rejoicing, I have fellowship with thee, and experience no abatement of that

assurance which hath often been sealed on my mind, of the safety and blessedness of thy state; and though Infinite Wisdom is pleased still to permit close trials and conflicts to attend, yet these are but marks of filiation; “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;” those whom He is in mercy preparing to be clothed in white, He is leading through many tribulations.

I remember when I was a child in years and in religious exercises, I thought there was none so exempt from trials and troubles as those who were truly devoted to God: but I have since been otherwise instructed; and I now believe, that they who are most entirely devoted to Him, are often led into the greatest depths of suffering. This is abundantly evinced by the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and confessors of the holy Jesus, who was himself “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;” nay, he was esteemed “stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; so that, should our judgment be so far taken away in the days of our humiliation, as thus to esteem ourselves “smitten, stricken of God and afflicted,” it is no

more than what happened to our blessed Lord. But what need have I to write these things to thee? thou knowest them far better than I am able to express them, and the ground and cause have been deeply opened in thee, to wit, that every thing in us might be given up, crucified and slain, but that holy birth of life, which, in perfect submission and resignation, prays always to its Father, who is in heaven, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done."

It is certainly the will of God, and consistent with His goodness, so to sanctify all crosses and afflictions to His children, as to make them a means of their passing more entirely into the Divine nature; of entering more fully into Him, who is the soul's rest and sure hiding-place forever; so that, putting their whole trust in God, they leave to His disposal all their concerns, both here and hereafter. I think I am sensible, whilst I am writing, of the ardent longing of thy soul after this state; and as fully so that it is the will of God in Christ Jesus to gather thee into it; and truly I believe, thou art far nearer to this perfect state, than many of

those whom thou preferrest to thyself, and who perhaps are little acquainted with thy depths of conflict.

I know thou makest no great account of outward crosses and sufferings. I know the distress of thy soul is the absence of thy Beloved, and Bridegroom of souls; but art thou grown therefore more indifferent about Him? are thy desires abated, or do thy longings cease? Nay, are they not increased, and art not thou become more weaned from every thing besides Him? What then shall we say, my dear friend? perhaps it was for this end that He has withdrawn Himself, (as to the sensible enjoyment,) that so we might become, by this means, more fully prepared, and our capacities more enlarged, for Him to take up His abode with us forever. Now, I have no doubt at all, but this will in due time become thy singularly happy and blessed experience. Oh! if I were but as fully persuaded concerning myself, that all that spiritual poverty, darkness, barrenness, and distress, which I frequently experience, would turn to the same good account; how thankful should I be! Yet I am

kept above despondency; my faith and hope, through and in Divine Mercy, are preserved. I know in whom I have believed, and in whom thou hast most surely believed; and that He is able to keep that which we have desired, and at times been enabled to commit unto Him. Amen.

In a feeling sense of the virtue, love, and sincerity of divine truth, concludes at this time, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XII.

TO FRANCES DODSHON.

Manchester, 9th Mo. 24, 1781.

My dear Friend,

Feeling at this time renewedly a considerable degree of sympathy, affection, and concern for thee, it is in my heart to visit thee with a few lines, though in truth I have not a sentence before me, nor any apprehension that I shall have any thing to say in

the truth, whereof thou art not more grown and confirmed by experience; yet if happily, through the Divine blessing, I should be so directed in this letter, that it should tend in any degree to stir up the pure mind, to strengthen the hands which are ready to hang down, and to confirm the feeble knees, I know that humble thankfulness would therefore arise, as indeed it ought, to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

In the account which thou writest me, concerning thy state, there is still much complaint of the frequent absence of that adorable Goodness, from which all real comfort and happiness can spring. This, added to thy advanced age and present arduous situation, together with some unhappy events which have lately happened in the compass of your meeting; the consideration and feeling of these things must needs clothe thy mind with sackcloth and great distress. The occasion which has been given, by reason of the things which have happened, for the adversary to speak reproachfully, the testimony seeming to fall in the streets, deserted and betrayed by those who should have

united in its support, is truly very affecting; so that indeed there seems great reason to adopt that mournful query, Lord, "what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?" or "by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" Now, my dear friend, in such a situation of things as this, what can we do? Can we rebuild the walls of Sion, or restore her waste places? Can we fight the Lord's battles, and turn again the captivity of his people? Are we able to go in and out before them, to mourn skilfully ourselves, and teach the daughters lamentation? Nay, who is sufficient for these things? What then remains for us to do? what is our proper business? Why, surely, that very same thing which the great apostle adviseth, in these words: "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business."

"It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" aright; the wrath of man (nor his zeal neither) worketh not the righteousness of God. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." "Study to be quiet," and in peaceful, perfect submission, commit thyself wholly into the hands of Almight-

ty God ; and in His will concerning thee, rest always satisfied ; for surely it is fit that He should dispose of us ; that He should direct every thing that any way relates, either to our outward or inward state ; because He is our Father, if we are but enough dependent on Him. He only is wise, and knows what is best for us, and what will most contribute to his glory. This is the acceptable state ; “ Thy will be done ; ” give what Thou pleasest, withhold what Thou pleasest. “ Give us this day our daily bread,” whether it be the bread of adversity, or the water of affliction ; or the bread which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. “ Thy will be done,” whether Thou be pleased to lift up the light of Thy countenance, and bless us with the sensible enjoyment of Thy glorious presence, wherein indeed there is life ; or Thou seest it more profitable for us to be exercised in a state of barrenness, mourning, deep feeling of our own weakness, and spiritual poverty, Thy will, Thy holy blessed will be done.

Now, I do believe thou art advanced far, very far beyond me in these experiences ;

but yet I know what I say, and indeed I have seen, and do see, such an excellence, such necessity, such perfection, safety, and beauty, in this state of perfect, total, unreserved submission and resignation to God, more especially in spiritual things, but indeed in all things; that I am no way able to express myself in a manner equal to my views and feelings of this state; nor to recommend it according to its infinite worth; because it is here we see our own nothingness, and the ALL of God. It is here that we receive counsel and ability to perform the service of the present day, resting satisfied with His appointments and allotments, whether in public or private labour, whether in doing or suffering, according to the will of God.

God Almighty, if it be His will, gather and preserve thee here, in a state of humble trust and firm reliance on His mercy; and limit and rebuke the power of the enemy, that he may never be permitted to bring thee into any degree of despondency.

To the keeping, guidance, and protection of the great Shepherd of Israel, I commend

thee with myself, and at this time bid thee farewell.

From thy loving, affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

P. S. Martha Routh is on a religious visit to some meetings in Yorkshire. Brother T. Cash, in company with Isaac Gray, is on a visit to several of the midland counties: and William Rathbone on the same errand in the southwest; so that the work of the Lord is going forward, and then, no matter who are the instruments, all is right that is in the Divine appointment. So that the walls of partition and opposition be brought down, no matter whether the silver trumpet, or the ram's horn be made use of as the instrument.

I cannot well forbear just adding, that the faith and hope which I have so frequently felt concerning thee, and sometimes expressed in my letters, remain with me in as great a degree as ever; and no shadow of doubt at any time attends my mind concerning thy state, which I verily believe to be in the allotment of consummate Wisdom,

and that it will turn to thy unspeakable advantage, and, in the end, be sanctified to thy everlasting salvation.

Letter XIII.

TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 11, 1782.

My dear Friend,

Thy letters we received duly, though we have not answered them so. I was anxious to hear of thine and the young man's safe arrival at your respective habitations, and was pleased to read the account of it in thy first letter. I was much pleased with it, as it seemed to me replete with sentiments and monitions, not only truly Christian, but very seasonable. It is cause of thankfulness to some of us, to hear that we have so much place in thy affectionate remembrance; and truly thou art frequently remembered by us, I almost think with as much affection and regard as thou canst wish.

Ever since thou left us, I have purposed to write to thee ; but a sort of procrastination somewhat natural to me, and not the least of my weaknesses, has hitherto prevented : yet I think I know so much of the nature of religious, I had almost said divine friendship, as to allow me to say, that it can be effectually supported without exterior correspondence, (though this I much approve in its place.) The nature, the ground, and support of this friendship, are most excellently described in a few words by the beloved disciple : “ If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” As this is experienced in any good degree, what a unity is felt with all the living, what sympathy, what harmony, what salutations of love unfeigned ; not only to particulars, but also to the whole family and heritage of God !

We may esteem, value, and regard one another as men, according to the opinion we conceive of each other's excellence, as I do thee for brightness, wit, and learning ;

but attractive as these are, had I beheld in my dear friend no higher excellencies than these, I should hardly have wished, if it had been in my power, to have cultivated an acquaintance with thee. No; it is the virtues of a hidden life, and the knowledge of one another therein, that cement the brotherhood, and unite the living members of the body, not only to the Holy Head, but unto one another; and here, and only here, the most excellent parts become truly amiable, under the sanctifying operation of that Power, which takes them out of the service of the natural man, and consecrates them to the glory and honour of Him alone, who is the Author and Giver of every good and perfect gift, and who alone can sanctify it.

In writing to thee, who knowest and carest for the churches, the state of things here presents itself; but alas! what can I say; I fear the case is too general, both church and state inclusive, "Without are fightings, and within are fears;" "abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death." Yet there are, I trust, both here and in most other meetings, yea, and amongst those also who

are not of this fold, those whose concern it is to watch and keep their garments, that so they may not be found naked; although these are deeply and frequently baptized, not only in the cloud and in the sea, and for the dead, but into a deep feeling of that prevailing famine, not of bread, but of the refreshing, powerful, life-giving word of God. Oh! how necessary, and how much to be desired, in such a situation of things as this, is total, perfect resignation; and, if happily, we might attain unto it, total, perfect dedication; that so we might stand upright in our various lots, subjected to the teaching of Divine Wisdom; and seeking to the Strong for strength, that we might be enabled to bear the burdens and discharge the duties He might permit or appoint unto us; and then all would be well, and we should be secure in His protection, how deep soever He might be pleased to lead, into the fellowship of His sufferings, such as are made willing to be conformable unto His death.

Great are the commotions that are in the world, great in the earth is the distress of nations, and great is the perplexity of many

exercised minds, who are, at seasons, tossed as with a tempest, and not comforted.—“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure,” and this seal forever will remain upon it, “The Lord knoweth them that are His;” and these he will preserve, who, like righteous Noah, are concerned to enter into the ark of His holy covenant; they shall be therein preserved safe, for a remnant of a holy seed, though it may be as on the waters, whilst the deluge of His wrath is poured forth on a backsliding generation.

I have written these things in the liberty and simplicity in which they have been presented to my own mind. I know thou art wise, not only to admit of this freedom, but, if it can be, to gather any little hint that may be profitable, even from the meanest instrument.

Our friend Sarah Taylor, who writes to thee under this cover, will give thee the best account of those circumstances thou enquirest after, relating to our worthy friend Joseph Harwood. She remembers to have heard him relate them, which I do not; any additions to, or improvements of, those frag-

ments I put together, would be highly pleasing to me. To preserve the memorial of the righteous, seems an act of justice due to the living and to the dead ; and particularly due in gratitude to Him, who hath been their Rock and their Strength, and by whose power and goodness they have been led and supported, through many tribulations, into His glorious kingdom.

I shall just say, before I conclude, that I wish for thee as for myself, an increase of every virtue ; and that we may experience, as an addition to all other blessings, the blessing of a thankful, deeply thankful, and truly devoted heart.

I feel in measure the good-will which truth inspires extend to thy family, in which I salute them, and wish the virtues and riches of it evermore to rest upon them ; that therein they may become fruitful to His praise, who hath called them to glory and virtue :—particularly I wish this for thy son ; may he, like good old Jacob, be concerned to seek, and favoured to experience, the Divine blessing to prevail above the blessings “ of his progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the

everlasting hills," to rest upon him and on his seed for ever.

I need not tell thee, that to hear from thee at convenient seasons, will not only be expected and acceptable, but acknowledged as a favour, by thy sincerely affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XIV.

TO ROBERT VALENTINE.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 15, 1782:

My dear Friend,

Understanding thou art likely to be at Kendal on first-day next, I could not with ease let slip the opportunity of writing, first to inform thee we got safe home the evening of the day we left thee; and I think I may safely add, we were favoured to return in some degree of thankfulness, under the covering of Divine peace.

We were much pleased, nay more than pleased, to hear thou hadst a satisfactory

meeting with friends at Leeds. What can we say to these things ! God only is wise, and all that He does is right. Oh ! that we may carefully endeavour after that perfect degree of resignation, that not only bows in submission to every dispensation of Divine Providence, but that can in every thing give thanks.

I think I know so well, my very dear friend, the Rock whereon thou standest, and its sufficiency to support ; the humility, simplicity, and dedication of thy heart to be, to do, to bear, and suffer all things according to the will of God, that it seems to me almost unnecessary to endeavour to express that desire and encouragement which I feel in my heart for thee, that thou mayst steadily persevere therein, even to the end. But I am not altogether ignorant of the devices of the enemy, nor of the deeply proving exercises which attend thee in the course of thy ministerial labours and sufferings amongst a backsliding and rebellious people ; and I know something, yea, more than language can express, of those most trying, most humiliating seasons, wherein the mind is

divested of its strength and comfort, and is suffered to feel, in an ineffable manner, its own weakness and misery. When I consider these things, my dear friend, together with thy advanced age, bodily weakness, the perilousness of the present times, thy distance from thy near connexions, and the unfeeling state of those who, many times, are thy attendants from place to place; when my mind hath been baptized into sympathy with thee in feeling these things, my heart within me hath been humbled on thy account; but yet I neither see nor feel the least room for despondency; on the contrary, my heart is filled with faith and encouragement for thee.

We know Him in whom we have believed; that infinite mercy, power, and love, are with Him; and that He is able to keep those who have committed themselves unto Him. What a blessedness there is in casting our care entirely upon Him! I fully believe, I can hardly help saying, I know thou dost this, and that therein thou wilt be safe, and infallibly experience, to thy everlasting comfort, that He, the Lord God Almighty,

who raised thee up to be His servant, and called thee from a distant land to labour in this part of His vineyard, will not only support thee in His service, and bless the work in thy hands, but will assuredly be to thee both sword, and bow, and battle-axe; thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

I hope thou wilt not be offended at the liberty I have taken to write these things; I have copied them, as carefully as I have been able, from the present feelings of my heart.

I should be glad of one line from thee, but I know thou writest with much difficulty; however, I hope, when it is well with thee, thou wilt remember me. My wife, brother Thomas Cash, and Margaret Cooke, unite in dear love to thee, with thy affectionate loving friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XV.

To RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 10th Mo. 28, 1782.

My dear Friend,

I confess that, in my own opinion, I have trespassed too much on thy charity and patience, in having so long deferred to acknowledge the receipt of thy very kind and welcome letter, dated 2d Mo. 24th.

I was pleased, nay obliged, by thy communicating to me so freely, seasonable intimations and just remarks respecting the nature and support of our discipline: they are my own sentiments; I wish to pay suitable attention to them, but may confess I have need often to have the pure mind stirred up, that I may both see and practice that which is required.

I suppose thou hast met before this time with thy brave old countryman, Robert Valentine. He laboured, with great fervency and uprightness, amongst us in this place, and some of us particularly were much comforted by his company. Martha Routh and

I rode nearly 200 miles to accompany him to some meetings in Yorkshire ; and indeed I must say, that his zeal, uprightness, and honesty, in rendering to all their due, without partiality, without hypocrisy, or respect of persons, were really comfortable, instructive and edifying ; and the more so, because I have sometimes been afraid these excellent virtues have been too much wanting, even where they ought to have shone with the most distinguished lustre. As Robert spent eight or nine days in Manchester, he can tell thee any thing thou wantest to know about us, perhaps better than I can. You have got Ruth Fallows too, I understand, amongst you, an excellent servant ; and Sarah Grubb, whom I love in the truth, is now on her way with her husband to your National Meeting. Ireland seems to be much favoured in this way : I wish fruits may arise equal to the cultivation.

I will not trouble thee with any account of my poverty and weakness ; how insignificant I seem to myself, or how mere a cipher in society. No matter for this ; I think I can say in truth, I envy no man's lot. I wish

for no greater, higher, or other place in the divine harmony, than that which unfailing Wisdom would form me for ; and so that I may be happy enough to gain an establishment here, I neither ask nor desire more.

Perhaps it may be as well for me to conclude here ; for though I could write much, what need is there of it to one who knows where all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are hid ! and where to wait to have them opened, and necessary instruction sealed ! I wish, above every thing, for myself and for thee, that we may frequently enough retire here, and dwell here ; for only here is real edification known, and wisdom and ability are received to do the will of God.

In a degree of the Heavenly Father's love, I often remember thee, and therein I wish to be remembered by thee for good ; in some measure whereof, at this time, I salute thee and thy family, wishing your prosperity in the best things, and an abundant increase of heavenly riches.

From thy truly affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XVI.

To ———

Manchester, ——— 1782.

If it were in my power to communicate to thee my motives for this address, how reluctantly I entered upon it, how willingly I would have found myself wholly excused from it, how sensible I am of the ungrateful task of administering reproof, and how little naturally I desire to be “my brother’s keeper;” how much I wish to mind my own business, and heartily despise the character of being “a busy-body in other men’s matters,” thou wouldst at least excuse me for giving thee the trouble of this letter: but didst thou know the power and end of that divine love which at seasons I have felt to counteract and overrule all natural reluctance, to silence all human reasoning, to baptize into a deep feeling and care for the things of others, for those things which are Jesus Christ’s, the things which concern His people, His cause and His honour; how under the prevailing influence of this love,

the condition of my brethren hath sometimes been brought near to my heart, and therein an ardent travail raised for the redemption of the whole creation ; didst thou know the ineffable nature and principle of this love, thou wouldst surely open thy heart to receive whatever might be communicated under its blessed influence.

And first, it is with me to put thee in mind of the uncertainty and transient continuance of all human satisfactions. Time is short, and it remaineth, that those “ who have wives be as though they had none ;” “ they that buy, as though they possessed not,” and they that plant, as though they did it not ; “ for the fashion of this world passeth away ;” for man hath but a short time to live, his days are few, and often full of trouble ; “ he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” Were it possible for us to secure to ourselves the full possession and gratification of all the desires of the heart and of the mind, to the latest period of existence here, the time would soon be over, and what should we do in the end thereof ? But alas ! how frequent

and great are the disappointments which attend those who are devoted to pursue the pleasures, profits, and honours, of this perishable world! what ups and downs attend our pilgrimage through time! how many, who are brought up in palaces, embrace dung-hills, whilst others are raised from a very low estate to sit amongst princes; so that there is no certainty of the continuance of any sublunary enjoyment, because that He, who is the God of heaven and of the whole earth, ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and raiseth up and pulleth down at His pleasure, that all the earth might learn to fear before Him.

Many who have been tried with seasons of prosperity, having departed from the fear of the Lord, and not walking humbly and thankfully before Him, have been stripped suddenly of their greatness, and brought into circumstances truly humiliating; and, like the abased king of Babylon, have been brought to acknowledge to the supreme power and wisdom of that God, whose mercies they have perverted, that all His "works are truth, and His ways judgment; and that those who walk in pride He is able to abase."

Oh! that we might be awakened in time, to a sense of our true interest, and danger of our standing; that so we might see the great necessity of, and be concerned earnestly to apply to the Father of Mercies for, the precious gift of that adorable wisdom, which directs the mind to God, and is able to preserve us in a state of humble, upright walking before Him, out of all the snares of the devil, the lusts of the flesh, and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

And now, having thus far expressed what has been presented, and opened the way, it seems, at least in my apprehension, in the line of duty, to put thee upon considering thy religious profession, and the consistency or otherwise of thy conduct with it; and this I do in a disposition the most unwilling to offend; I do not wish to upbraid or irritate, but to stir up the pure mind, and *that* not only for your own sakes, but that the occasion of offence and stumbling might be removed from others. Oh! that it was thy concern to know and answer the end for which the Lord raised us up to be a people, and in adorable condescension to set his

name amongst, that so we might be for a remnant of a holy seed, to hold up faithfully to the nations the standard of truth and righteousness, and become as "lights in the world," "as the salt of the earth," as way-marks to the people, "as a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid; that others, seeing our good works, might glorify our Father who is in heaven. Now, when the professors of this blessed truth walk in the holy light and nature of it, under the exercise of the cross of Christ, this gracious end is so far answered; and in this sense it is strictly true, that no man liveth to himself; our lives have a certain influence upon others, as saith our blessed Lord, "he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."

When the virtue of divine light and truth first broke forth amongst our predecessors, it brought forth its proper effects; humility, meekness, resignation to God, self-denial, and universal love, were conspicuous amongst them. What circumspection, what simplicity and moderation, appeared amongst them! a life all opposite to the na-

ture and spirit of this vain world, by which the witness in others was reached, and numbers who saw them, did fully acknowledge them to be "the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Now, since it hath pleased Divine Wisdom to favour thee with a birthright amongst this people ; and, after having exercised thee a little in the line of adversity, to give thee the desire of thy heart, and turn the balance of prosperity in thy favour, what have been the effects and consequences of it? What returns have been offered, of love, of gratitude, of humble dedication and obedience? What concern to set up thy banner in the name of the Lord, and to supplicate that unmerited Goodness, which, for a season, hath appointed thy lot as in a southern land, to give thee also springs of water, those sure, nether, inexhaustible springs of consolation, which flow from the Divine Presence. I do not know, but I am sure appearances declare the contrary, (I wish they did not,) to the grief of some, and the offence of others. I do not wish to enter into particulars, either of what I have seen as to your appearance, or what hath been re-

ported of your appearing at public places of amusement and dissipation ; but you are both of years to consider, that such an appearance and conduct are diametrically opposite to the principles you profess, and must consequently obstruct every degree of fellowship with the most sincere part of the body, and will not recommend you to the more serious and upright part of the people of any denomination ; and what is worst of all, will certainly tend to separate from the Divine favour.

Having written these few hints in a degree of simplicity, in which I feel the covering of peace, I sincerely recommend them to your serious consideration ; and beseech you not to stifle conviction, nor slay the Witness in yourselves, by which all the hidden things of darkness would be brought to light, and the line of judgment drawn upon transgression ; for by judgment iniquity is purged ; that so you might be brought into a life, truly serious, by the fear of the Lord, to partake of the fellowship of the living body, whose fellowship is with the Holy Head, Christ Jesus. That God himself may con-

tinue and sanctify His mercies towards you, and delight to do you good, is the desire Himself hath raised at this time in my heart for you, from your well-wishing friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XVII.

TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 5th Mo. 24, 1784.

My dear Friend,

Under the united influence of gratitude and friendship, I now intend, though late, to make some reply to the last two letters I received from thee: and truly I can say, the whole of them are acceptable to me; the sentiments every-where just, thy hints of counsel to me seasonable and wholesome; the account of thy own state acceptable and instructive.

Thou tellest me, that, when thou wast last in England, thou wast both at our Monthly and Quarterly Meeting, but didst not see me; and then wisely remarkest upon it, that

circumstances might attend to prevent, which thou wast not acquainted with. It is true, my dear friend; but all things are known to Him who numbers the hairs of our head; and I entirely acquiesce with thee, that to stand approved by Him, is the great object at which we should all aim. These are so much my sentiments, that I hardly know how to go about to excuse myself to any mortal. Sometimes, indeed, I look forwards, with some degree of hope, towards times of greater enlargement; and I believe that, if this be consistent with the Divine allotment, it will sure enough come to pass in His own time. There is little need, in these days of lukewarmness and declension, to discourage any from going about from place to place, and attending distant meetings, under a profession of supporting the cause of truth and righteousness: yet really, when I consider the conduct of some amongst us, who have travelled much on earth, and yet have made but very little progress towards the heavenly country; who have been very frequent in the attendance of meetings, both at home and at a distance, and yet have

made no proportionable acquisition of the graces and virtues of the heavenly life; a jealousy and fear attends my mind, lest many, who move about amongst us, do it not upon the right Foundation. In this remark I have not the least view of the ministry, nor of my friend Richard Shackleton.

I remember observing, in a former letter, that you have been much favoured in Ireland with ministerial labour; this has been the case since, still more abundantly. I cannot help looking upon it as a spiritual phenomenon that merits awful attention.

I know it will afford my dear friend some satisfaction to hear, that a few weeks back, in company with my much esteemed friends, Martha Routh, and Sarah Reynolds of Warrington, I paid a religious visit to the families of friends in three meetings belonging to our Monthly Meeting, which service, I may thankfully acknowledge, was graciously owned, from place to place, by the blessed Master, to my humbling admiration.

I suppose you have got, before this time, my brother Thomas Cash, and also Isaac Gray. I hope their service will be accepta-

ble ; they have a “ good report of all men, and of the Truth itself.”

In the salutation of unfeigned love, which I feel far oftener than I write, I remain thy truly affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XVIII.

To ——— ———

Manchester, ———

I think I may in sincerity appeal to Him, who knows the hearts of all men, that a concern is often with me, that I might be preserved from intruding myself into the concerns of my brethren, or ever coming under the character of “a busy-body in other men’s matters.” Nevertheless, apprehending myself at times engaged by the best Authority, to communicate to others what appears to me to be the mind of Christ, a concern is likewise raised on this hand in my heart, that I might obtain mercy to be found faithful. It

is from this motive only, that I am at this time engaged to hint a little, as I may be enabled, what hath been presented before my own mind, as I was sitting alone in my chamber this evening, my mind being turned to consider or look towards the state of your family.

And first, I was lead a little to consider the weaknesses and infirmities, which are too frequently observed to attend, whilst clothed with flesh, the most devoted followers of the Holy Jesus; when the holy watch is not maintained, when the holy influence is withdrawn, they then become weak, and are like other men. Thus, they who are dedicated to the service of the ministry, and bear as in their foreheads the inscription of holiness, having to conflict with all the struggles of the private soldier, may sometimes manifest weaknesses inconsistent with the dignity of the holy office; and he, who yet remains to be the accuser of the brethren, will not fail, where he can, under any disguise, gain admittance, exceedingly to expose and magnify these; and would lead, by little and little, to despise the Lord's anointed, to

“speak evil of dignities,” and lightly to esteem the sacrifices which the Lord hath commanded to be offered in the holy place.

It is not in my heart to justify, to excuse, or extenuate, the failings and imperfections of the foremost rank in the Lamb’s army. I know it deeply behoves them, above all others, to walk circumspectly, to make straight steps to their feet, to be examples to the flock; and I am verily persuaded there are none feel more deeply for their offences, none more deeply bowed under the humiliating sensibility of their own unworthiness, none more frequently covered with blushing and confusion of face than these. I do not want to excuse or explain away their failings; but I want to impress a proper regard to the dignity of the holy office; I want to revive that ancient precept, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” God forbid, said David, that I should put forth my hand against the Lord’s anointed. If weakness appear, if the enemy prevail in any little matter, Oh! “tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the

daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." Oh! did but the people know, were it but possible for the uncircumcised to consider, the secret travail of their spirits; the painfully distressing conflicts which these have passed through, and which yet await them; how often they have wandered in the wilderness, "with their hands upon their loins as a woman in travail;" what they have to pass through in the weeks of preparation, while eating the roll of prophecy, and lying on their sides; how often such now are covered with sackcloth, and have secretly to muse on the contents of the roll, wherein is written "lamentations, and mourning and wo;" were it possible, I say, for such, who are yet whole, not having yet fallen upon that Stone which the Lord hath laid in Sion for a foundation, and been thereby broken, and enabled to offer the sacrifices of a broken heart; were it possible for those, who have not trodden the arduous path of regeneration, to consider these things, they would not need to be reminded to mark such whom the Lord had set over them, to esteem them very highly, to honour them with

double honour for the work's sake, because "they watch for your souls, as they that must give account" in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Permit me to express some degree of jealousy, lest, instead of this esteem, regard, and double honour, there is a murmuring, unthankful, gainsaying spirit, which is for condemnation; for, whilst I was musing on these things, the exceedingly unhappy case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, was brought into and affected my mind; and the language of their complaint was brought to my remembrance: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Thus, through the seduction of him who "blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart," they murmured against the meekest of all men, and the friend of God. Ah! poor return this, for all that good and deliverance which he, as an instrument, had wrought for them, in bringing them out of Egypt, in bearing them in his bosom, and so frequently and availingly interceding for them with the Almighty.

But the Lord pleaded for him against these men, and destroyed them by a remarkable destruction. I mention this instance as it simply arose, without any charge or application, leaving that to the Divine Witness in your bosoms, to which I recommend every one of you, in order that you may be enabled, to reap the caution and benefit intended by these broken hints, and remain, with suitable affection and regard, your friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XIX.

To ——— ———

Manchester, 10th Mo. 26, 1786.

My dear Friend,

I am obliged to thee for the particular account of the state of the church in ———, though, alas! it is a very poor one; and I am afraid such is the case too generally amongst us every-where. Why it is so, the cause is as obvious as are the effects;—the people have

forsaken the Lord, and gone after other gods; and therefore it is that the Lord's heritage is become desolate, and "the daughter of Sion covered with a cloud." Yet, however discouraging the present situation of things may appear; however affecting the prevailing desolations, so that the standard bearers may be ready to faint, and like poor Elijah, may be ready to think and conclude that they only are left, and their lives also are in danger, I do believe there is not only left a "seven thousand" amongst us, "all the knees" of whom "have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth" of whom "hath not kissed him," but I do believe the Lord, in unfailing mercy, is bringing His work again upon the wheel, and that he will yet more and more effectually revive it, as "in the midst of the years." So that I would not have us to be discouraged; I believe the Lord would not have us to be discouraged, neither grow weary, nor faint in our minds: but rather, let the hands that hang down be lifted up, and the feeble knees confirmed; for the Lord is remembering Sion; He will rebuild her waste places, so that she shall yet be-

come the “perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth.” “Therefore rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her, that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.”

The cause is not ours; “if thou dost well, shall thou not be accepted?” Let others do what they will; let them choose and worship what gods they please, “as for me and my house we will serve the Lord:” let us thus consider and resolve. What! though many are offended in Christ, and draw back from following Him, shall we also go away? God forbid this should ever be the case with any who have known Him, and that with Him are the rewards of eternal life.

Oh that we might be encouraged to persevere in faithfulness, under every permitted dispensation, whether to ourselves or to the church of Christ? Leaving the effects and consequences of things to Him, who hath the control of times and seasons, let us be resigned to our various allotments, and not

murmur at the cup which the Father hath given us. Remember, we are but servants and stewards; that it will be enough for us, if we be found faithful. What! though that part of the vineyard be unpleasant to labour in; though there be not many mighty works to be done, because of unbelief; though the fields should not be white unto harvest, but rather the fallow ground want ploughing up, that the thorns and briers may be consumed; nay, though none should believe our report, and “though Israel be not gathered,” those who have been careful to abide in their lot, who have been attentive to the voice of the true Shepherd, and given the people warning from Him, “shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and their God shall be their strength.”

I wish thee to let ———— see this; I may acknowledge he has been much in my view whilst I have been writing; for, though he is personally a stranger to me, yet my heart hath been filled with earnest prayer for his preservation in the right way of the Lord; that “neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,” may ever be able to

beguile him of his reward, or frustrate, in any measure, the gracious intentions of the Almighty concerning him.

I wish for thee, my dear friend, careful, reverent attention, and humble obedience to every manifestation of duty; and that hereby thou mayst increase in true riches.

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XX.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

7th Mo. 8, 1787.

My dear Friend,

I think I do, as seldom as any man who wishes well to the cause of religion and virtue, recommend it by books, though I do believe, if people would read such as deserve reading, as thou sayst with a desire to profit, they would always reap some benefit. My reading now, not only from necessity but judgment, is pretty much confined. With

respect to all the forbidden productions of the tree of knowledge, I have seen a beauty and safety in that state of mind expressed by the psalmist, and earnestly have I desired to dwell in it: "Lord, I do not exercise myself in things too high for me; my soul is even as a weaned child." The Scriptures without, and the law written in the heart, are the most profitable of all books, and in meditating on the Divine precepts written there, with a desire to obey, the most blessed knowledge is obtained.

May that Mercy and Goodness, my dear friend, by which thou hast been visibly followed, and preserved from the intoxicating influence of prosperity and affluence, continue to prepare and fill thy heart with redeeming Love, and enable thee more and more to increase in "bags which wax not old," "eternal in the heavens."

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXI.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 15, 1787.

My dear Friend,

I think I should not do justice to the book of letters which thou wast so kind as to lend me, and which I now return, if I did not acknowledge that my heart was affected in reading several passages in it. The author's dedication, and upright zeal and jealousy for the glory of God, and for the ever blessed Jesus, felt precious to my heart. I do think, there is no one, who has a spark of goodness in him, who can read her work without some benefit; and though I think her piety exceeded her religious understanding, I have no manner of doubt concerning her, and all such as she was, under every name, but that they are numbered among the children of God, and have their lot among the saints.

Do not think, my dear friend, I am recommending books too highly. Every thing is good in its place; but I wish for thee, as for myself, that we may have in our possession

the truth itself, and that we may wait (that best of exercises) to feel when it shall please the Lord to replenish our hearts with that light and virtue which come from Him, the mysteries of His kingdom opened in ourselves. The Lord Almighty would, in great mercy, by various means, prepare us for and engage us to seek after, those Divine communications from Him, the Fountain itself, wherein "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Thus we should experience another kind of teaching, and another kind of knowledge, than that which books or outward instruction can furnish us with.

I long, my dear friend, that we may grow and increase in the knowledge and experience of that Divine communication, from the Fountain of Divine intelligence, and with one another in Him, which standeth in no need of the medium of words or writing, and in which the communion of saints doth eternally consist.

Under some measure of the influence of the Heavenly Father's love, I sincerely wish thy prosperity in the best things, and remain thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXII.

To RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 25, 1787.

My dear Friend,

With all who, like thee, have leisure and talents at command, the common apology for delay in writing—the want of opportunity, is likely to meet with little credit; and yet, if that has not hindered me from communicating to thee by letter, what I should often have rejoiced to have spoken to thee, if present, I cannot tell what has. Dear Rebecca Wright used to acknowledge another impediment, and say she was too proud to write, intimating that her performance did her no honour. I do not know if pride has much influence over me in these respects; but I do believe it operates very differently on different minds, with regard to writing, and may, for ought I know, have worse consequences in prompting some to write, than others to be silent. I have no view, however, to discourage communications of this kind, when the streams are not

impure. For my part, I freely confess, it affords to me a highly grateful and pleasing satisfaction ; and the want of an opportunity to enjoy and cultivate it, where I see a disposition homogeneous to my own, is not the least or lightest of the crosses I endeavour patiently to bear.

My feelings and sentiments of friendship are much above my outward condition ; and though I do not murmur, I am almost tempted to it, when I consider what opportunities it deprives me of enjoying in the company of my dearest friends ; and how little I can help those in distress, for whom I feel the deepest sympathy. Think of this, and be thankful, you whose lot is in a southern land ; yes, and let me consider it, and be thankful too, as appointed by Him who only is wise. For these light afflictions are but for a moment ; and truly my mind is frequently raised above them, looking forwards in hope, towards that blissful state, when all the baneful shackles of mortality shall be put off, and the children of the kingdom meet in Him, who is the centre of unity, beyond the limits of time and space, no more to be separated.

My youngest child died whilst I was in London, and my wife did not choose to bury her until my return, which hastened my departure from thence, and deprived me of the opportunity of taking a satisfactory farewell of my friends.

The candlesticks were to be made of pure gold, of beaten work. I am sure I never saw more need in my life, that they should be made of beaten work, that they may bear tossing and hammering, without being broken or spoiled. And oh ! how necessary it appears to me, that there should be an increase of skill, care, and necessary qualifications, in those who may be considered as snuffers or hammers. I cannot express the pain and jealousy that fills my mind, with respect to this class in our Society ; there is so much want of bowels, sympathy, and of that love that edifies, that I really fear, instead of being like pillars, waymarks, and standard-bearers, supporting the hands that are ready to hang down, they are, in too many places, as dead weights in our assemblies ; and, like the false and idle shepherds formerly, are more solicitous to fill them-

selves with the bread that perishes, than the flock with that which nourishes the soul up unto eternal life.

Well ! my dear friend, in proportion to the pain and suffering I sometimes feel, on account of the elders I have thus described, who, like the fruitless fig-tree, do but cumber the ground, I rejoice in those who are alive, and labouring for, and measurably possessing, those qualifications which enable them to discharge the important duties of their office, to their own peace and the edification of the churches. Oh ! the almost infinite service such might, nay would be of, if they were but enough devoted, did but enough dwell under the efficacious influence of that love, in which Christ died for us. How would this quicken us to diligence, and enable us to labour for the good of our brethren. But, for want of this, how indifferent we become with regard to others ! or, if otherwise, however active, if not under the influence of Divine love, it is but like fruits brought forth in the shade. Oh ! the beauty and benefit of words fitly spoken, and in season. “ As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine

gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear." Thus, my dear friend, thou, who art called into this line of labour in the vineyard, and hast received suitable qualifications for the work, being also providentially disentangled from the cares of this life, "Be sober, be vigilant." "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might." "Cast thy bread upon the waters." Be not discouraged at the appearance of things. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Thy friends here are tolerably well in health, except dear Martha Routh, who at present is but poorly as to the body; the other part of the compound in that good woman, is, I believe, always improving. John Routh and his sister visibly grow older, but still move a little about; she (I hope both of them) seems wisely attentive to improve the golden sands, that so her measure may be

completely filled up. Through great mercy, we live in true unity, which I hope will never be broken.

Believe me to be invariably, thy sincere and affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXIII.

To ———

3d Mo. 22, 1788.

Being, contrary to my expectation and endeavours, prevented from attending the ensuing Monthly Meeting at ———, of which I was the more desirous, for the same reason that I hoped, and still hope, thou wilt be there ; I find freedom, and that, I trust, after having maturely considered it, with a desire to do right, to communicate to thee what passed in my mind, long before I knew or expected that would have happened which prevents me.

It hath not been usual with me to think beforehand of the affairs likely to come be-

fore such a meeting ; but the mention made by the friends of ———, of the application of a certain person to be admitted a member of our Society, occurred again and again to my mind, and connected with it the parable of the “leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” It was hidden ; but its operation, though secret, was gradual and progressive, till there was a total assimilation. “Till the whole was leavened,” the process was from within to without ; the exterior part was the last affected, the last whose appearance was altered ; but though the last, it was as completely changed as the rest ; “the whole was leavened.”

This seemed to convey instruction to my own mind, as setting forth the prior necessity of an inward change, for the proper regulation of the outward deportment. I thought, too, it might be applied not improperly to the case, nor, perhaps, unprofitably to the consideration of the party alluded to. I do not doubt his having been sensible of the secret influence of the Divine principle in his own conscience, or that his judgment has

been measurably convinced by the testimonies he has heard borne to the truth, as professed by us as a people. I as little doubt the sincerity of his desire to be considered as one believing in the same principle, and desirous to walk by the same rule; but, rather than he should desire a premature admission, I hope he will not be offended, if I recommend to his serious consideration, whether there is yet that thorough conviction, that perfect harmony of faith and practice, as would justify the conclusion that "the whole" is leavened: for, as he that believeth will not make haste, so a waiting for the right time, when perfect unity will be experienced, will not retard his growth in the truth, nor lessen the tender regard of his friends towards him, or the peace of his own mind.

I desire to be as brief as possible. I have nothing but good-will in my heart towards him, and if, under the influence of that Wisdom which alone, in such cases, is profitable to direct, Friends shall admit him a member of the Society, I shall freely give him the right hand of fellowship, and desire to be his

companion in the regeneration and in newness of life.

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXIV.

TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 10th Mo. 4, 1789.

My dear Friend,

I cannot let slip this opportunity of conveying a few lines to thee, by the favour of our truly valuable friend Martha Routh; and though such is the present barrenness and poverty of my mind, that I hardly seem able to form a sentence, yet, presuming upon thy charity, and the terms of our friendship, (for better and for worse,) I will first begin at home, and acquaint thee that all my family, and thy friend, are favoured with health; and it is, and I hope always will be, interesting and grateful intelligence to me, to hear the same account of thee and thine.

Please to give my love to all thy family,

especially to that daughter, I know not her name, who, I have heard, has lately appeared in a few words in your meetings; though a stranger at this distance, I feel something like sympathy with her, and a degree of solicitude attends my mind for her preservation, and that she may grow from "strength to strength," and increase in every good word and work, to an establishment upon that unfailing Rock, whereon they only can build, who hear the sayings of Christ and do them.

I have a mind to tell thy daughter a dream; for he that has one, thou knowest, the prophet says, may tell it, though I have told this to very few. It is a dream I had the night before I first appeared in a few words in a meeting, though I may say, what afterwards I was very thankful for, that though it made some impression on my mind in the morning, I did not once think of it whilst I was in the meeting. I thought I was intently engaged with some others, in some outward business, when, all on a sudden, a message was communicated by Divine authority, but I knew not well from whence the voice pro-

ceeded; however, the words I heard distinctly to this purpose: "Cease, or thou must cease, from the business thou art now engaged in; there is another work for thee to do; for the Lord is about to work a more thorough reformation in the earth than any which hath hitherto taken place:" to which I thought I answered,—“Alas! how is it possible that I can be of any service in, or contribute to this work, being so exceedingly poor, and destitute of every degree of strength and ability to do it;” and indeed I thought I felt myself so, when I spoke it, as much as ever in my life; unto which I thought the voice replied,—“Thy strength and ability will not be required; this work can only be effected by the strength and power of God.” Perhaps this may be some little encouragement; it is with that view I write it, that we should not sink under the feeling of our own insufficiency and weakness, but, in a state of humble dedication to the Fountain of all sure help, have our whole dependence and expectation from Him, whose is the work, “the power, the kingdom, and the glory. Amen.”

It will be news to tell thee, that I intend going for Lancaster to-morrow, to our Quarterly Meeting. I have been several little journeys on religious occasions, since I saw thee in Manchester; and can tell thee truly, I have ever been favoured to return in humbling gratitude and peace.

I have heard of thy good works, in going about here and there to sit with Friends in distant meetings. This is doing wisely; it is making the best use of time. Oh! how precious is that council of the wise man, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." This is the way to serve our generation with faithfulness, and to secure that most desirable answer at last, when our accounts are given in, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

I am, my dear friend, in much nearness and affection, with a heart filled with desires for thy present and everlasting welfare, thy loving and true friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXV.

TO ELIZABETH RATHBONE.

Manchester, 7th Mo. 19, 1790.

My dear Friend,

A degree of solicitude has, at times, attended my mind, for thy preservation, arising, I believe, from the love of "my Father and thy Father, of my God and thy God;" and therein, as my mind was led this morning to look towards thee, a hint, or word or two, like counsel, which I think right to communicate, presented itself to my mind:—Be quiet, abide in the holy patience, and let it have its perfect work, that thou mayst "be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Let us remember, my dear friend, (I have need awfully to remember it,) that the sacrifice of our will, as a whole burnt offering, is what the Lord is requiring of us; and is, indeed the root or essence of that life that must be given up, if we would be the disciples of Christ, who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him: and it

is only in this state of resignation that we can pray to "our Father which art in heaven, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

It is an acceptable thing to the Lord, to keep the word of His patience: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, (said the Lord to the church of Philadelphia,) I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." I long for thee, my dear friend, that thou mayst be preserved in patient resignation and dedication to the Lord; and therein abide all the varied dispensations and turnings of His holy hand, that so thou mayst be formed by Him, a vessel to His praise. Look not back; but I have no jealousy that thou wilt do this, but look not forward either, with too much anxiety or desire to explore the Divine purpose: "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Thus I wish thy patient perseverance, under the exercise of the blessed cross of Christ, and endurance in the furnace, and under the forming of His holy hand; and when the dross is purged from the silver, "there shall come forth a vessel for the Finer."

Therefore, it is in my heart to say, however deeply thou mayst be tried, still look to Him, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," on whom all sure and sufficient help is laid; "who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Let this be thy continual care, to have thy whole dependence on Him, who hath laid down His life for thy redemption, and who, blessed be His name, hath by His allurements brought thee into the wilderness, that He might speak to thy heart, as He hath done to many of us, in mercy that can never be sufficiently adored, whose souls, in very early age, He has ravished, as with one of His looks, with one chain of His neck; therefore have some of us been made willing to forsake all and follow Him, whom our souls loved, "because He first loved us." As thy expectation is from Him alone, I feel an assurance that He will have thee in His keeping, that the "bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench, till He send forth judgment

unto victory ;” but that He will sanctify every dispensation to thee, and thee unto Himself, and so fully accomplish in thee all His pleasure ; which is the present prayer of thy sincerely affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXVI.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 15, 1791.

My dear Friend,

There is, I believe, an obligation to duty, above the fear of punishment or expectation of reward ; and because I wish thee the most perfect state, I wish thee this experience ;—a state wherein all selfishness, both in spiritual and temporal things, is lost or swallowed up by divine, universal, disinterested love, as a drop of water in the ocean. And though I do most assuredly believe, that virtue is its own reward, that a cup of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not go without a reward ;

yet I have often thought it a subject worthy the consideration of those who are stewards, and desire to be faithful, that this is neither the time nor place of rewards or punishments, though perhaps the earnest of both is frequently felt.

I apprehend that many, even of the wise in heart, have been ready to stumble here, thinking that their faithfulness and piety should have engaged the Divine interposition, to exempt them from the sufferings of this present life ; so thought (it is likely) Brutus, who, when overcome by Antony, in a cause wherein he thought virtue had engaged him, is said, with his latest breath, to have expressed this desponding exclamation, "Oh virtue ! I have followed thee as a substantial good, but I find thee only an empty name." How much of this appears in the book of Job, whose trials were as singular and great as his conduct had been upright and approved ! and David tells us, "that his steps had well nigh slipped, because he envied the prosperity of the wicked ;" when he saw how they flourished, like a green bay-tree, and contemplated the se-

vere trials that were permitted or appointed unto him, he was ready to conclude he had washed his hands in innocency for nought. Nay, time would fail to recount the sufferings, the trials, and probations that have attended the peculiar heritage of God in all generations ; their great privilege, it is plain, hath ever been, Divine support and preservation under trials, and not an exemption from them. How great and various were the troubles and trials that attended the good old patriarchs, and how singular and proving those that were experienced by the man after God's own heart, whose son even conspired to take away his life ; but He, who is a God keeping covenant and mercy, vouchsafed His protection and sure support, and was to him, in all his troubles, a rock, a refuge, and a sure hiding-place.

Whilst I am writing, I wish for thee, my dear friend, beyond all that can be expressed, that this may be thy happy experience, if trials of any sort be permitted to attend thee ; for though I know not how applicable, or otherwise, any thing of this sort may be to thy present state, yet this I know, that there

is no combination of outward circumstances can exempt us from trouble, though we tread upon the high places of the earth, and dip our feet in oil; but in the most proving situations, though some encouragement, instruction, and consolation may be derived from considering what hath been the lot, and what the support, of many elder brethren in the family, who, through many tribulations, have entered the kingdom, yet the most sovereign help and comfort is obtained by looking unto Jesus, who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," whose "visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men;" who, being "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and having been tempted, knows how to succour those who are tempted.

Let us, then, my dear friend, in our varied allotments, lay aside every weight and burden, and "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

I would not make any unnecessary addition, but I am so fully satisfied that it is not the will of our Father, who is in heaven, that any of His children should be discouraged, under whatever disadvantage, in their own apprehension, they may be placed, or whatever cup they may have to drink, or baptism to pass through ; but that they should be encouraged to put their trust in Him, to cast their care upon Him. None, who ever did so, ever where or ever will be confounded. Oh! let nothing move us from this Foundation, and we shall be safe. Oh! how memorable is that declaration of David, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ;" and again, "Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Thus in heights and depths, in seasons of trial and of rejoicing, let our whole dependence, our humble trust and confidence, be in and upon the sure mercy of God in Christ Jesus ; and then, I am sure, He will sanctify all His dispensations to thee ; that He will bless thee indeed ; and that, as it hath pleased Him to appoint thy lot as in "a south land," so He will also continue, as He hath in mercy

hitherto at seasons done, to give thee
 “springs of water,” yea, the sure, nether,
 inexhaustible springs of consolation that
 flow from His presence.

I am thy sincere, affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXVII.

TO RICHARD SHACKLETON.

Manchester, 3d Mo. 18, 1791.

My dear Friend,

Though I have for some time, and often
 of late, thought of writing to thee, yet some-
 how, I have so little aptitude to the business,
 that I am not prepared with one single sen-
 tence to begin with. It is true, I could tell
 thee that I do feel an increasing nearness
 and regard for thee; and, if I am not mis-
 taken, it is on that Foundation that will en-
 dure for ever. And in the spiritual rela-
 tion as a brother, I have comfort in thy re-
 membrance of me, and wish for thee an in-
 crease of all spiritual blessings in Christ.

I wish, I hope sincerely, that every birth in the ministry thou hast mentioned, that is of the heavenly Father's begetting, may live, and grow, and prosper, and bring forth fruit to His praise. Here will be work for you, who are fathers and elders in the church, to endeavour to bring them forward healthfully, to enter into sympathy with them, to feel and care for them, and in the gentle wisdom and love of Christ, to communicate freely such hints of caution and counsel as may appear necessary, not in the deadness of formality, not in the authority of office, not under the influence of partiality, or the wisdom of this world, which shall come to nought, but in the meekness and gentleness of Christ. This will be most likely to contribute to the preservation of all that should live. I do not like too much dressing, and pruning and nursing; I think little good hath ever come of it; neither do I approve that conduct in young ministers, that, like spoiled children, run to complain of every pain and exercise that may attend them. It would, I believe, be far more profitable for them, to keep their attention inward, to pon-

der these experiences, and ask wisdom, strength, and counsel, of Him, who “giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.”

It should ever be remembered, as instruction for those who judge of the ministry, that “there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and differences of administrations, but the same Lord;” and that this diversity is so almost infinitely great, that we can hardly tell when we have made sufficient allowance for it. There is a vast variety, thou knowest, in the flowers of the field; how abundantly does the carnation or the rose excel the daisy; and yet every one of these possesses a distinct beauty, and unites in the general incense, or the display of their Creator’s power. What a variety in the notes and songs of the birds of the wood! what a difference between the sparrow and the nightingale! and yet we know who it is that careth for the sparrows; and do they not all increase the general harmony? Let not then the smallest gifts ever be despised, or their cultivation and improvement neglected. It was said to him who had improved the two talents, and would no doubt have been said to him who

had received but one, had he improved it, as well as to him who had received and improved the five,—“Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Give my love to thy daughter; I feel a sympathy and care for all who are called to service in the Lamb's army, and are desirous to move on the right Foundation. O! that all such would abide in the patience, and under the clothing of humility; and in a dedication of heart, under the exercise of the cross, faithfully do the will of their Heavenly Father, and “be content with their wages.” I am apprehensive the enemy has greatly injured many, by secretly working in the unrenewed nature, and leading them to expect, or to do, great things; whereas it would be right for such “to study to be quiet,” to abide in simplicity, to “take no thought for the morrow;” but, in singleness of heart, attend to the requisitions of the present moment. And let us ever esteem it a rich reward, to be favoured with the evidence of peace in our own bosoms: this will be found of infinite value, in a solemn, hastening hour.

I am persuaded, that many who have been called to the work of the ministry, and who have appeared, for a short time, fresh and lively in a few words in our meetings, and afterwards have dwindled and withered as "the grass on the house-top," have suffered this great loss principally for want of dedication to the altar. Some such, perhaps, being tempted to think that the little committed to their care was hardly worth improvement; that it was not likely to edify the people, but it may be rather to be despised, and that it procured to themselves no honour; but that, if they had received talents like some others, they would have been willing to occupy with them. Thus, indeed, I fear that many, whom the Lord has raised up amongst his people, for Nazarites and for prophets, have, through entering into this sort of reasoning with the serpent, been beguiled of their reward; and, instead of being fixed, as stars of different magnitudes, in the firmament of the Lord's power, have, through the pride and subtlety of the serpent, been drawn down to the earth. I had no thoughts of writing so much on this sub-

ject; but, under a sense of its importance, I often feel a strong desire that all, who are called to any degree of stewardship of the grace of God, might happily obtain mercy to be found faithful, that in the solemn day of reckoning, they might give in their account with joy.

Our ancient, respected, honourable friend, John Routh, departed this life the 31st of 1st month. He had a short illness, (about four days) attended with little pain; and we had, I hope, the best reason to believe that he was favoured to depart in peace. His sister bears this event in a manner truly Christian; she is herself but feeble, and in so weak a state of health as does a little alarm our fears.

My wife unites in the salutation of unfeigned love to thyself and whole family, with thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXVIII.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 22, 1793.

My dear Friend,

I have often, of late, felt something like the salutation of love moving in my mind towards thee, in which I wish thee both natural and spiritual health; and as there is no medicine that can be prescribed or taken, equal to wholesome food and exercise for the preservation of bodily health, so, I believe, that by this means also our spiritual health is best preserved. But we may observe some people, as to the outward, whose constitution is not bad, yet feeling some slight indisposition, would rather have recourse to medicine, or give themselves up to the feeling of their infirmities, than employ the strength they have in necessary exercise, and content themselves with such food as would be most profitable for them.

Something like this I apprehend to be the case with some religious characters, who, attending too much to every little feeling of

weakness, and comparing themselves with others, whose gifts and callings may be very different to theirs, (though not at all more acceptable to God, or more accordant to His will) are ready to be discouraged, and count themselves fit for nothing ; whereas the Lord is only glorified by our obedience, in that station in which he hath placed us ; so that, let the sphere of our activity be what it may, let the orbs in which we are placed be high or low in human estimation, let our gifts or callings be less or more conspicuous and admired by our fellow-pilgrims, those who are faithful and honest in their varied allotments, and seeking nothing for themselves, but to bring glory to God by a life of humble dedication to Him ; these, however they may have been regarded amongst men, and however they may, at times, be ready to judge of themselves, will finally meet with an equal welcome from the blessed Master, as approved, good, and faithful servants. Oh ! how wisely then do they act, who, taking no anxious thought for to-morrow, are attentive, according to present ability, to the duties of the present day ; who, satis-

fied with their own allotment of suffering, of exercise, of consolation and labour, cheerfully comply with the Divine appointment. These neither desire more nor fewer talents than what they have received, but, wisely occupying with those which they have received, experience an improvement.

I hardly know how to put into words what I have in view to recommend, and what I am favoured, at seasons, to see is the most excellent way; though possibly, my dear friend, thou art much more advanced in this way than I am; it is to be “careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication,” to let our wants be made known unto God, casting all our care upon Him who careth for us; to cast off every weight and every burden, and “run with patience the race that is set before us,” doing with our might whatever our hands find to do. But what meaneth this language, which we so often feel, and so often hear?—I can do nothing, I have no ability, I have neither strength nor understanding; and in whose heart hath this language been raised more feelingly than in my own? for who is so

deaf, or so blind, as the servants and messengers of the Most High, when His light is not with them? but when He, who "increaseth strength to them that have no might" of their own, and who speaketh to things that are not, as though they were, and they obey Him, when, in gracious condescension, He is pleased to call, to move to any little service amongst our brethren.

Let us not, then, complain for want of ability, nor reason upon our own unfitness. Remember, it was through "faith the walls of Jericho fell down;" but the rams' horns were employed as instruments. Oh this faith! to which all things are possible; which removes mountains; in which we should walk, and without which "it is impossible to please God." Let us contend for it, let us watch unto prayer that it may be increased, for by this all the fiery darts of the enemy shall be quenched. I know that Jesus is the author of this faith, I know it is the faith of the operation of God; but yet I am verily persuaded, that by standing open, and willingly yielding to this operation, or turning away and shutting our minds

against it, we shall experience an increase or diminution of it. Abraham believed God, against all human probability, and "it was accounted to him," saith the apostle, "for righteousness." "Lord! be it unto me according to thy word," said the holy Virgin Mary : thus prepared, she conceived the Redeemer of mankind. "Have faith in God," said the ever blessed Jesus to His disciples ; and to Thomas, "be not faithless, but believing." "Said I not unto thee," was the answer of our Lord to Martha, "if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

It is not in my heart, very far from it, to put any upon moving in the Lord's service in their own wills, or their own time ; but I want to recommend to thee, my dear friend, what I feel to be necessary for myself,—an unreserved dedication of heart to God, a careful abiding with, and attention to, the blessed Master. It is in my heart to say to thee, Whatsoever he saith to thee, do it. No man, "by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature." "I would have you," said the apostle, to be "without carefulness." Let

us leave every thing to Him who has all power; let us commit ourselves, and our all, our children, who are dear to us as our own lives, unto the Bishop of Souls, who loves and cares for them more than we do, who (blessed be His holy name, saith all that is within me) hath not only died for us, but for our children. Oh! that they also may be made willing to die to themselves, that they might live to Him.

Under the fresh feeling of the Heavenly Father's love, (of which I am no ways worthy,) I salute thee as a brother in Christ, and commend us both unto His holy keeping.

JOHN THORP.

Remember me affectionately to thy wife, whose dwelling, I trust, is secure in the valley of humility.

Letter XXIX.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 11th Mo. 15, 1794.

My dear Friend,

Having the opportunity of conveying a few lines to thee, I am unwilling to let it slip, and though I should have nothing to write worthy of much regard, yet thou wilt at least be convinced of my good-will, and that if I had any thing better, I should as freely offer it. I am not much in the practice of boasting of my infirmities, and, truly, I have nothing else to boast of. I often think there is too much of this amongst us; and yet, lest thou shouldst think of me above what I am, I am free to tell thee, that weakness and poverty are often my companions; that jealousy and fear, both night and day, do frequently attend me, lest I should not be so improving my time, and the talents committed to me, as I ought to do; lest I should not be so steadily preferring the things which are most excellent, not enough setting my affections on things which are above, and

looking "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" lest obedience should not keep pace with knowledge, and the day's work with the day: because I do see so clearly that "the end of all things is at hand;" that the summer will soon be over, and the harvest ended. Now, if any thing like this should also be thy experience, I am not sorry for it; but I do pray that this poverty, this weakness, this jealousy and fear, may, to both of us, be sanctified to our complete redemption.

Oh this great work, REDEMPTION! if this be but happily accomplished in our experience, it matters very little what else is gained or lost. I thought so, through adorable Mercy, in my early youth; when, through the visitation of the "day-spring from on high," a prospect was opened into things which are invisible; the transcendent beauty of holiness was disclosed, and the glory of this world was stained in my view. With what zeal and fervency was I then engaged to labour, to obtain an inheritance "eternal in the Heavens," "that fadeth not away!" and oh! the solicitude that I have, and do

now feel, since I am advanced more in years, that I might not survive the greenness of my youth ; that I might not become more lax, lukewarm, and indifferent, than I was “ in the day of mine espousals.” And, indeed, I can say, to the glory of His name, who lives for ever, that my love to God, and to my brethren, has not been on the decrease. No, no ! my soul was never more ravished with one of His looks, with one chain of His neck, whom my soul increasingly esteems “ the chiefest among ten thousand,” and “ altogether lovely.” Never, never, had religion so many charms, that I do many a time think, when the vision of light is a little opened in my view, that if I never had before, I should not then hesitate a moment, but endeavour to give up all for eternal life.

Now, my dear friend, that what I have written here is likewise descriptive of thy religious situation, I feel strongly disposed to believe ; and therefore it is in my heart to say, let us thank God, and take courage ; let us lift up our heads in hope, that He, who has been our morning light, will be our evening song ; and though, in our progress

through this wilderness, we should meet with tribulation, (for I have been instructed to believe, there is no outward situation exempt from trials,) yet it is the privilege of the dependant children of our Heavenly Father, that they know Him to be their sanctuary. This state of things is a compound of good and evil; Gall and Wormwood are deeply mingled in the cup we all have to drink, though not perhaps in like proportion; but let us receive our respective portions as coming from His hand, who will make it a cup of blessing to His children. We have the authority of Holy Writ to say, "in all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saveth them." Oh! what condescending language is this:—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Thus, whatever be the permitted dispensations of suffering, of any who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; however such may, at

seasons, be divested of strength, and clothed with sackcloth; though such should have to pass through deep and fiery trials, yet shall they be preserved; the Lord, in whom they trust, will be with all these; will sanctify the dispensations, and, in his own time, bring deliverance; will clothe with the strength of salvation; will take off the sackcloth, and clothe these with gladness. So that, for the encouragement of the upright and sincere, whose hands, I know, are many times ready to hang down; yea, to the whole Israel of God, it may be said as formerly,—
 “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms.”

Please present the salutation of my love to thy wife. I shall only add the desire which I feel, that the Divine blessing may attend thee; and oh! that it might please the God of blessings to bless all thy children.

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXX.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 4th Mo. 26, 1796.

My dear Friend,

It is now more than twelve months since I received thy kind letter, though there has not passed one month, perhaps not one day, in which I have not affectionately remembered thee; and thou wouldst long since have had a reply to it, if I had thought thou hadst stood in need of any instruction or help from me. If the enemy has gained any advantage by my silence, either against thee or me, I am sorry for it; but I believe thou hast been too long acquainted with his devices, to be in much danger from that quarter. The very poor account thou hast given me of thy own situation, did not at all surprise me; it was just such a one as I should have expected from thee; the humble state of thy mind, added to its great sensibility, under the humiliating, gradual process of regeneration, disposeth to such feelings and such fears. I believe there are many of us,

were it not that we are sometimes favoured for the sake of others, that would have much the same account to give of ourselves. I will transcribe for thee a few lines from an ancient, pious writer, and which I would have thee admit as an answer to all thou hast said of thyself: “This I do impart unto you
 “in all sincerity, out of a true Christian zeal
 “from my fountain gifts and knowledge;
 “and I do not extol or set up myself, but I
 “speak brotherly to your mind, to stir you
 “up, and to comfort you, that you should
 “not think the yoke of Christ to be heavy,
 “when oftentimes the external man doth
 “cloud the internal, that the poor soul
 “mourneth, for its image, which yet is purified, and truly begotten, and brought
 “forth under tribulation, and the cross of
 “Christ. It is even so with me, and other
 “Christians besides. Think not strange at
 “it. It is very good when the poor soul is
 “in combat, much better than when it is
 “imprisoned, and yet playeth the hypocrite,
 “and maketh devout shows. It is written,
 “that all things shall serve for the best to
 “them who love God. Now, when the

“ combat of the soul doth arise and proceed,
 “ that it would fain see God, and yet can-
 “ not at all times attain the same, then know
 “ that it fighteth for the noble trophy, of
 “ which the external man knoweth nothing;
 “ yet the Spirit of God fighteth in the na-
 “ tural soul for that which is supernatural,
 “ that so he may lead the creature into God.
 “ He would always fain crown the soul with
 “ the precious image, if the blind reason
 “ would but give Him room, and suffer the
 “ understanding to co-operate. We must
 “ labour and strive against the external rea-
 “ son, and also against flesh and blood, and
 “ wholly oppose the assaults and objections
 “ of the devil, always breaking them, and
 “ casting them away, and resist the evil
 “ thoughts, motions, and influences, and ef-
 “ fectually with our whole soul, with prayer,
 “ supplication, or internal resignation, press
 “ into God’s mercy.”

Thou mayst be sure enough, my dear
 friend, that if Providence seeth meet to make
 any other use of thee, than that which He
 hath long done, as a preacher of righteous-
 ness in life and conversation, as a Father to

the poor, and a succourer of many, when the right time shall come, thou wilt not be left in any doubt about it; but if otherwise, it is all right; it is enough if we are found faithful stewards in the station which the Master hath appointed us, whether as stewards of grace, or of the things of this life. What cause have we, not only to be satisfied with, but thankful for our lots? our outward circumstances, our mental powers, and spiritual gifts, are diversified by Him who only is wise; and it is deeply fixed as a sentiment in my mind, that the allotment or gifts of each individual of us, if we act well our part, and are faithful in the improvement, will conduce more completely to fill up the measure of our happiness through all eternity, than any other or varied portion could possibly do. The great point, by which glory, honour, and peace, both here and for ever, would certainly be gained, is for each of us to stand in our own lot, resigned to the will of God in all the varied dispensations of His providence; seeking no more, either of prosperity or adversity, of poverty or riches, of suffering or rejoicing, in things spiritual

or temporal, than He knows to be best for us.

I note all that thou hast hinted, of some circumstances which, as a parent, do furnish for thee some degree of affliction. Experience hath taught me to sympathize in a case which, though somewhat dissimilar, hath been to me exceedingly distressing; but, my dear friend, what can we do for our children? nothing of ourselves, to be sure, that will do them any good; but, through Divine help, we can love, pity, and pray for them; and, indeed, with some, this is the last and only resource; and oh! the fear that I have felt, lest I should be deficient here. "The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" let us be found diligent in this holy exercise. The example of Job is worthy our imitation, and with what fervency did the father of the faithful address the Most High with this petition; "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" "God forbid," said the prophet Samuel, concerning the rebellious house of Israel, "that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." Oh! that both thou and I may be found fer-

vent enough, and frequent in this great duty ; often retiring to the closet of our hearts, the temple which God hath chosen, and there pouring forth our supplication to “our Father which is in heaven,” that He would take our children under His care. Much benefit would arise from this practice. I am very far from thinking thee a stranger to this Christian exercise ; for any thing I know, thou mayst have gone far beyond me in the practice. If so, permit me to recommend it to thee to persevere ; and, for thy encouragement, let us remember the example of the woman, who came to Christ, and would not be denied, Mat. xv. 22 ; and likewise the parable of our blessed Lord, by which He taught that men should always pray, and not faint, Luke xviii. Oh ! the consolation and support we also should derive from thus spreading our cause before the Lord, and committing ourselves, our children, and our all into His hand, who is the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls.

I do not expect to be in London this year ; so probably may miss the pleasure of seeing thee there ; some more distant period may

furnish the opportunity. I have, however, much pleasure and comfort in thinking of thee, because I am so fully persuaded of the sincerity of thy desires; and that, in the great day of recompence, thou wilt be numbered amongst the humble, faithful servants of God.

Wishing thee every comfort and every blessing consistent with the Divine will, I remain thy ever affectionate and sincere friend,

JOHN THORP.

N. B. Present the salutation of my love to thy wife, and to Priscilla Hannah Gurney; tell her to remember the parable of the talents, and I also ought to remember it, particularly that part, "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers," the Lord's money, nothing of our own.

Letter XXXI.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 2nd Mo. 2, 1798.

My dear Friend,

Though I have not written to thee for a long time, it would be great injustice to suppose I had forgotten thee. I do not even suspect thee on the same account, and I am not willing to be suspected. I remember thee often, my dear friend, I believe in the manner thou wouldst wish me, according to the ability and strength afforded; and I have the comfort also to believe, thou art graciously remembered of God, and that thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before Him. Yet, like a wise and tender father, He knoweth how to preserve His people humble, and in a state of deep abasement before Him: because He knoweth, who knoweth all things, that this is the best and safest for us.

I have, indeed, often observed, with humble admiration, the unfailing wisdom of His discipline in this respect, always increasing,

with all His gifts and favours, our humble abasement before Him ; and seeing, in the Light, the necessity of this, I have often fervently petitioned for it. Though painful apprehensions, and many fears, do generally attend a state of spiritual desertion, as if it were some way or other our own fault, and the consequence of some impropriety of conduct ; yet, as the eye is kept single to Him in submission, and the “hunger and thirst after His righteousness” maintained, such, at seasons, when it pleaseth Him, and most certainly, when their days of mourning and conflict here are over, shall, with this righteousness, be forever filled and clothed. So that I believe the Lord would have us to be encouraged to press forward, keeping the mark in view : “Let us not be weary in well-doing ; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not ;” nothing hath happened to us but such things as are common to our fellow-pilgrims ; though I know the enemy tells quite a contrary story, and would have us to believe, that our case and lot is harder and worse than hath fallen to the share of any other. But no credit must be given to him, who

was “a liar from the beginning,” and who always seeks to cast down those whom he cannot exalt above measure ; but thou “art not ignorant of satan’s devices.” The good soldier thou knowest, must endure hardness ; and let us always remember Him, of whom the prophet spake, that He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;” and can we expect to get to heaven without passing through a similar process ? Thou and I have now long been engaged in the Christian warfare ; I hope and trust not altogether unsuccessfully. We can be at no great distance from the end of the Christian race ; the crown is at the end of it, laid up for, and shall be given to those, who love the appearing of the Lord, the righteous Judge, which I have no doubt is thy case ; I pray that it may evermore be mine.

Martha Routh and myself have just gone through a religious visit to the families of our friends in this place. Merciful help hath been afforded, and I hope the labour will not be in vain ; there are about sixty families in membership, and many individuals, and a considerable number not in society, who generally attend our meetings.

Give my love to thy wife, who, I believe, hath made great progress in that way that will end in peace. Oh! how I wish, how I long to encourage all my fellow-pilgrims to persevere in the high way to the Kingdom, and in an especial manner such as have been long on their journey, and are at no great distance from the heavenly country, that the strength of all such may be so renewed, that they may “run and not be weary,” that they may “walk and not faint.”

Please remember my love to P. H. Gurney; she has been out a long time. Well! there is but one best way, and that, I believe, is to do what we are bid, and no more.

I would have my dear love remembered to Ann Summerland; dear woman, her warfare is nearly accomplished, and a heavenly mansion, I have no doubt, is richly prepared for her.

In dear love to thyself, in which my wife unites, I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 10th Mo. 28, 1799.

My dear Friend,

Many a time of late I have thought I would write to thee, and I certainly should before now, if I had not felt myself almost constantly unfit for any sort of communication, through somewhat of an uncommon degree of what we call spiritual poverty. I do not say this in a way of complaint; I have no doubt it is all in wisdom. I do not even wish the dispensation to be changed before the time; I have no cause to believe that I am alone in this condition, though, as to the degree, I am sometimes ready to think so. I do not only feel so destitute of spiritual enjoyments, but of ability to do any thing to help myself, that, although I have been endeavouring after spiritual attainments now for more than forty years, yet, when I sit down in meetings, in a stripped state even to a degree of nakedness, I know no more how to help myself than when I was a little child. Some-

times, as my mind sinks into submission, I am permitted to feel a little quietness and peace, and sometimes, for causes that I do not clearly know, I experience considerable conflicts; but, as I said before, I have no doubt this is all in mercy. I know Him in whom I have believed, and my soul desires to bow in submission to all His dispensations.

I do not know how I come to write so much about myself, unless it be to convince thee, if thou also shouldst sometimes pass through seasons of deep humiliation and abasement, that thou art not indeed the poorest of the spiritual family. Nay, if thou wert to think thy case was not at all to be compared to others, I myself have thought so too; how often have I been ready to say,—yes, thus good people may sometimes pass through these baptisms, perhaps for their further purification, or it may be to enable them to speak more feelingly to others: but what is that to me? I have reason to fear mine is rather a state than a baptism, and proceeds from the unrenewed condition of my own heart. What else can be the reason

why I am so insensible of good, and sit meeting after meeting as the "heath in the desert;" nay, even when testimonies are borne, I am like the deaf adder. Thus many a time, in years that are now past, hath my poor mind been "tossed with tempest, and not comforted;" and thus, at seasons, am I permitted, in measure, to be exercised to this day. Many a time have I said in my heart, Lord, if these dispensations are intended to make me feel what I am without thee, and what I am but; that of myself I can do nothing; that "there is none good but One, and that is God;" if to convince me of this, be thy gracious purpose, surely it is enough; I am full of this conviction. Notwithstanding, when I consider what the ever blessed Master suffered for us, when He trod the wine-press alone, and gave "His life a ransom for many," I am even ashamed to think any thing of what we meet with of the nature of suffering in our daily Christian warfare. No, my dear friend, let us rather glory in tribulations also, inasmuch as we are made thereby more conformable to His blessed example, who was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

I have just now, since writing the above, given thy last kind Christian letter a fresh reading ; upon which I know not that I have much to remark, except that thou thinkest too ill of thyself, and too well of me. In both respects, perhaps, this letter may help to set thee right. On the subject of human infirmities, I once heard (and I thought it did me good) a truly living, humble minister of the gospel say, that though he could or durst not say, that he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, he could say this, that he had not left off striving to arrive at that attainment. Let us, then, keep up the warfare as good soldiers of Christ. O ! let us be careful and diligent in this important business. Let not the world have too much of our time or attention ; we, at our time of life, must very soon leave it. Be encouraged, my dear friend, to persevere in the Christian warfare, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Occupy with the talents received ; attend to thy stewardship, both of grace and the things of this life. Do all the good the blessed Master bids thee do, both to the souls and bodies

of men ; and then, never fear when the day of reckoning shall come, thou shalt receive the answer of “ Well done, thou good and faithful servant : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Let us number our mercies, and commemorate the many favours, preservations, and deliverances, that have been hitherto vouchsafed unto us, and bless the name of Him who lives for ever, for what He hath given, and for all He hath denied ; and when His fatherly corrections and chastisements may be exercised upon us, those certain evidences of filiation, O that we may be enabled, in feeling submission, to kiss the rod ! Thus would all the gracious designs of our heavenly Father be accomplished, and all His dispensations sanctified unto us.

Remember my love affectionately to thy wife, whom I wish well on her way to the heavenly country, and am, with sincere love, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXIII.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 21, 1802.

My dear Friend,

Although Robert Barnard hath written to acquaint the Darby family of our safe return, yet that does not excuse me from furnishing thee with the same information.

We got home the day after we left you, a little after four o'clock ; the roads were good, and our journey as pleasant as the severe season would admit ; but what reconciled every thing to me was, that my mind was favoured with sweet peace, as, through great mercy, I had been made willing to do what I believe the blessed Master bid me do, without attempting more. Surely we do not serve a hard Master ! Many, many times, from early age, hath my heart been filled with this acknowledgement. There never was so good a Master ; who gave such excellent wages for such imperfect work ; who is not watching over us for evil, but for good ; not taking occasions against us, but forgiving, pitying,

helping us, again and again ; for there is no end of His compassion, let the devil say what he will ; raising us up, and bearing up our heads above the troubled waters, and encouraging us to persevere. This He doth, ever being “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” blessed be His holy name for ever ! for such a High-priest became us. Oh ! was He not exactly such a Saviour, what should we do ? Surely, my dear friend, this is not the language of the barbarian to thee.

I had little expectation of expressing myself thus ; but my heart was moved with gratitude to our most gracious Helper, and I felt the springing up of that Love, which had no beginning, reaching towards thee ; and, under its influence, I wish thee “to thank God and take courage.” Fear not, saith the Lord, “for I am with thee.” In every permitted trial, he will be near thee to support thee. Therefore, my dear friend, be humbled in His presence ; put thy whole trust and confidence in God thy Saviour ; bow in gratitude before Him, who hath done great things for thee ; lift up thy head in hope,

that He, who hath been thy morning light, will be thy evening and thy everlasting song. And I believe it right for me to add, that "although thy house be not so with God ; yet He hath made with thee an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

Present my dear love to thy wife, whom I love for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in her. Oh ! how beautiful is that saying of the apostle, and how deeply instructive, "God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Please to give my love to Sarah Allen, and tell her, I wish her to remember, with frequency and gratitude, that interesting declaration of the apostle : "Ye are not your own ; for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

I look back with pleasure on my winter visit, and feel grateful for your kind attention. I am, with true love, and best desires for thee, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXIV.

To ——— ———

Manchester, 11th Mo. 20, 1802.

Dear Friend,

Thy letter, dated 11th Mo. 24th, I received duly ; and as it appears to have been written in a good degree of candour and unreserved freedom, I feel disposed, under the influence of sincere good-will, and (if I am not mistaken) a disinterested love to the ever-blessed Truth, to make thee some reply.

And first, I do not blame thee, circumstanced as thou professest thyself to be, that is, having little or no unity with Friends, either in faith or practice, for withdrawing thyself from them. I do not see how thou couldst, with any degree of honesty, have acted otherwise ; but whether thou actedst wisely, with proper reverence, fear, and care ; whether thou tookest counsel of God or of an enemy ; whether thou didst not admit these differences of opinion on important points, on ground too superficial, though with some

uprightness of intention, and probably with some expectation of being an instrument of further reformation, for I am not ignorant of satan's devices; whether thou mayst not have suffered thyself to be too hastily moved to give in to new opinions, perhaps from a variety of motives,—I am indeed disposed to doubt. Time and consequences will show whether, in these movements, thou hast been building upon the Rock or on the Sand.

The charges of superstition and formality, which you bring against the Society you have left, appear in my view rather the effects of prejudice than a well-informed judgment. Such an application of the words superstition and formality, is, I think, unprecedented. There is perhaps as little of formality amongst us, as can be made to consist with regularity and order: and I do expect that experience, in time, will convince some of you of the necessity and benefit of this. I know of nothing in the discipline recommended and practised amongst us, as to the substance and material parts of it, which hath not evidently its foun-

dation in Divine Love, and in that sympathetic, brotherly affection, and watching over one another for good, which the religion of the gospel requires. But if this discipline, and these forms are moved in, and maintained in a dead and lifeless manner, (and yet one can hardly suppose this to be the case without exception any where; but admitting it is) the fault is not in the form or in the rules of our discipline, but in the want of humbly seeking after and waiting for the influence of that Divine Love, which would enable us to move in these forms, and put in practice this discipline, to our mutual edification.

The offence which some of you have taken, and the strictures which thou hast published on the manner of our marriages, really seem to me quite childish. No doubt, some part of our proceedings in order to marriage, which once were necessary, may now be spared. It appears that Friends have thought so, and accordingly have now made the way less tedious; and probably, when the Society shall see the propriety of it, as some of its members now do, the manner of

our proceedings may be still more simplified; but any how, as it hath been practised at any time amongst us, there hath been nothing in it that I could have believed a man of thy talents and understanding would have stumbled at, or been offended with.

Thy definition and ideas of revelation, human reason, and conscience, appear to me confused and indistinct. Surely there was a time when thou couldst better have distinguished between human reason and Divine revelation. Thy remarks upon the Scriptures I heartily disapprove. There are, I think, very few of thy observations on that subject, that would meet the approbation of any man, who would make a right use of his reason; they are far from being new, or new to me. I have read, with pain, many such things in the works of unbelievers; but I wish thee to consider what sort of characters they have generally been, who have written against the Scriptures; and what sort of people they have generally been, who have given in to this infidelity. Consider the lives and conduct of these men, and contrast them with the lives of those

who have been the firmest believers, and most diligent readers of the sacred writings; and it will, I hope, afford thee some light on which hand the danger lies. I myself, as well as Timothy, have read the Holy Scriptures from the years of childhood; and by them, I believe, I can say truly, I have been often profitably instructed and comforted, but never received any hurt. I believe I have not a religious acquaintance in the world, that would not write the same testimony; and I am almost persuaded, that if thou wouldst consult thy own experience, and that of all the truly religious characters thou hast known, you would say very much the same thing. Are not then all the arguments against, confuted by facts and experience in favour of, the Scriptures?

Thou needest not have said, that our Society sometimes called the Divine principle in man, "Christ within;" thou mightst have said, (what thou canst not be ignorant of,) that this is the language and doctrine of the Scriptures. I believe it would make more for our peace, and preservation from error, to admit the express testimony of Holy Writ,

that there is no God but One, none good but One, no Divinity but One, and that Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son and Sent of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was united with this One Divinity ; and thus united with Omnipotent Love, and receiving from His Father all power, both in Heaven and on the Earth, He became, by His state, character, and the Divine appointment, the Author of eternal redemption to us ; for He, possessing in Himself all the perfection of the first Adam, in perfect union with the Divinity, became the Head and Fountain of all the regenerated human race, who derive their heavenly life, nature, and image from Him ; and all that He did, and suffered, in His outward manifestation, was for our sake. Blessed be His name, He needed not to suffer for Himself, who was the Lamb Immaculate, in whose mouth was found no guile, being holy, harmless, and undefiled, though “ in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” No, it was on our account, according to the declaration of the prophet, “ Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem Him

stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Agreeably to this declaration, is that of the apostle Peter, 1 Peter, ii. 24. Let us then beware how we undervalue the merits (for I do not know a better word) of our Saviour's sufferings : " the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." I have no belief, I never had, that the sufferings of the Holy Jesus, when He poured out His soul unto death, were in order to satisfy or appease any wrath that was awakened in the pure Deity Himself. " God is love," " the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever ;" but though we should not be able to comprehend the why and wherefore of our blessed Lord's miraculous conception, holy, self-denying life, sufferings and death ; yet, unless we will reject the whole body of Scripture evidence, we must believe they were all neces-

sary and indispensable to our complete redemption.

If mankind were better acquainted with, and more willing to believe, the fall of all mankind in our first parents, by whose transgression sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; did we read more in the volume of our own hearts, the corruption and depravity of our fallen state by nature ; how we have lost the image of holiness, and that pristine purity and heavenly nature in which man was first created, and to which we are called ; we should see more clearly, and better understand what is meant by “ the second Adam,” “ the Lord from heaven,” “ the quickening Spirit,” “ the Resurrection and the Life,” and by the emphatic words of Ransom, Purchase, Salvation, and Redemption through Jesus Christ.

Whatever may be thy sentiments on these subjects, I am jealous of many, who, in these days, like the builders of Babel formerly, are exploring new ways to Heaven, by the exertion and power of their own reason, that they are too much strangers to the glorious dispensation of the Gospel, the reign and gov-

ernment of Christ, the King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace ; and therefore do not see the necessity of being born again, before they can see this kingdom, which none can enter but those who are first “converted, and become as little children.” All these believing in the Scriptures, and the power of God, believe also in Christ ; for They are one, and these know the truth of His blessed promise, “ If a man love me, he will keep my words : “ and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” “ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” Where then, my friend, is the distinction thou thinkest should be more strongly marked, between Jesus Christ in spirit, and His Father, dwelling in us ?

I have written far more than I had a view of ; but my heart was full, and I yet feel a measure of that love that beareth and hopeth all things, in which I desire for thee, as for myself, an establishment upon that Foundation, which God hath laid in Sion, and which never can be shaken. Endeavour after stillness, quietness, retirement, and resig-

nation ; and in the simplicity of a little child, wait upon God, and watch unto prayer that He may be pleased to show thee, as in time past, the way He would have thee to go, and whether the path thou hast lately trodden, be the way to the wilderness, or the way which He hath cast up for thee to the city of God. Be jealous over thyself with a godly jealousy ; ponder the paths of thy feet, and watch against that grand adversary of man's happiness, which first beguiled the woman in paradise, and hath cast down many of the stars of heaven, which, if they had humbly abode in a state of dependance upon Him, who appointed them their place and station, would have been fixed in the firmament of His power for ever.

I feel the love of our Heavenly Father moving in my heart for thee. I feel compassion for thy family, and for all those who may look to thee for direction ; and strong are the desires that I feel, that, in that awful day when inquisition shall be made for blood, thou mayst be found pure from the blood of all men.

I am thy sincere friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXV.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 3, 1802.

My dear Friend,

Within a few months back I have spent many hours in the company of thy son and daughter Rathbone, to my own satisfaction, and I hope not unacceptably to them. The death of my dear friend Robert Benson, furnished an occasion for this opportunity. For fourteen years I had been intimately acquainted with that dear man, and his friendship hath been to me fruitful of much comfort. This is one of those losses (I had like to have said evils) that advanced age subjects us to ; with this aggravation, that, at that season of life, the loss cannot be repaired. For him there is no cause to mourn; he has gained, I have no doubt, an admittance into the glorious Church Triumphant.

I know not whether any body may have thought it worth telling thee, that I have spent a month in London this last summer. I had for some time wished for an opportu-

nity, in some easy way, to sit with my friends in all the meeting-houses in London; and believing it right to pay a visit to my relations there, particularly my eldest brother, now nearly seventy-three years old, in a declining state of health, and an only sister, in much the same condition, I thought this would be a convenient time for me to accomplish my prospects, with regard to my friends. Accordingly, I was at all their meetings, and some in the neighbourhood, to my own satisfaction and peace, and, for aught I know, to the satisfaction of my friends also, for they everywhere behaved to me with the greatest kindness.

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXVI.

To ——— ———

Manchester, 12th Mo. 20, 1802.

My dear Friend,

Were it not that I have a fixed disapprobation to dabbling and quackery, in diseases of the mind as well as body, thou wouldst probably have heard from me in this way before now ; but I know that wounds, however skilfully treated, even under the care of the best physician, must have time to heal ; and inward stillness and quietness certainly contribute much to this desirable end. But in looking at thy situation, with some degree of solicitude, and desire for thy preservation in the way of holiness and peace, there arose some sentiments in my mind, that I thought it would be best, in the freedom of true friendship, I had almost said in the liberty of the Gospel, to communicate.

We are told, by an Authority which we are both willing to acknowledge, that “all things work together for good to them that love God,” and who are willing to manifest their

love by their obedience ; if so, the late painful, or deeply trying event which thou hast experienced, is one of those “all things,” which the Lord Almighty would bless and sanctify to thy spiritual improvement, thy increasing refinement, and perfect purification : and then, the little time thou mayst have to stay, will be abundantly blessed, both to thyself and others, by giving thee an opportunity, through Divine help, of filling up more fully the measure of thy duty, both to thy generation, and to the Lord thy God, the bountiful Author of all thy sure mercies.

Do not think, my dear friend, that now thy very dear, dear companion is removed to his place, I have no doubt, in the glorious Church Triumphant, that thou hast nothing to do, but sit down and lament his loss. This would be a poor return for the favour of having had his company for many years. It would be a poor return of gratitude to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. No, no, my dear friend, we are accountable for ourselves, for all the favours, for all the mercies, for all our time, and for the talents we have received

to occupy with ; and nothing but faithfulness and diligence, in doing the will of God from the heart, and making a sacrifice of our own, will ever enable us to give in our account with joy.

There is no combination of circumstances, or peculiarity of situation, in which we can be placed, wherein it will be safe for us to lay down plans for our own movements, or to circumscribe our own path. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is expressive of that state of mind we should aspire after ; and to be able to pray, "not my will, but Thine," O Lord, "be done," in me, and by me, in my house, in my family, "on earth as it is in heaven." This is the acceptable state, which the Lord will bless. O ! that our dwelling might be here, where holy help would be afforded, to walk before the Lord with acceptance, in that way which He hath cast up for us.

As I believe it has been thy care, (and will now be thy comfort,) beyond many others, to please and honour him whom the Lord gave to be thy husband, so now it hath pleased Him, who doth all things right, to

remove thy husband to a better country and inheritance ; that which I wish for thee, my dear friend, is, that thou mayst cleave more closely, devote thyself more entirely to Him, who is a husband to the widow, the orphan's only hope, the God in whom the fatherless find mercy ; and then, I know, He will guide thee continually, and "satisfy thy soul in drought," and thou shalt be "as a watered garden. He will be thy support and thy counsellor ; He will bear up thy head above the troubled waters, and will enable thee to lift up to Him, the hands which are ready to hang down, and confirm the feeble knees : for, blessed be His holy name for ever, it is His delight to do good to those who love Him, and whose dependance is on Him alone.

Thus it is in my heart, from the Fountain of that consolation which is in Christ Jesus, to speak comfortably to thee, and to encourage thee in the name of Him who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," to trust in His name ; and then He will bless thee, and thy children with thee, and enable thee to fulfil all His will.

I am, with true love to thee and all thy dear children, in which my wife unites, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXVII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 31, 1802.

My dear Friend,

We are now advanced one year further in life than when we saw each other. We have both lived longer, by many years, than mankind upon an average do. We have had, in our very different allotments, many trials under which we have been supported, and many, very many mercies, which I hope we shall never forget, in humble gratitude, to number. May that Mercy, which hath followed us all the days of our lives, be still graciously continued to us ; and may it be our care to wait daily, to feel our strength and hope renewed in Him, who hath hitherto

been with us ; that so we may derive that holy help and virtue from Him, which will enable us to fill up the measure of our duty as the day advances, and make us fruitful in old age.

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXVIII.

To ——— ———

Manchester, 3d Mo. 3, 1803.

My dear Friend,

Being under some engagement to attend a marriage at Morley, I was necessarily deprived of the opportunity of attending our monthly meeting, and consequently of seeing thee and thy family, which otherwise it would have been pleasant for me to have done ; for though I might not have been able to have contributed more or less to your comfort, I should at least have had the satisfaction of seeing you, and inquiring of yourselves how you were.

P*

I hope, by this time, thy mind is so far composed, (however if that time is not yet come, it will come,) that thou canst look at the late distressing event without pain, and congratulate dear Robert's safe arrival in the heavenly country, where there are neither fears nor conflicts, where all tears are wiped from all faces.

It does, indeed, constitute no small part of my present comforts, to contemplate the happy lot of many, whom I have known and loved, and of thousands whom I have never known according to the flesh, who are happily gone before us into the Paradise of God; who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises. May we not, nay, ought we not, humbly to hope, that through the same mercy which they obtained, we also, in a very little time, may be numbered amongst the children of God, and have our lot among the saints. Meanwhile, let us endeavour to fill up the measure of our duty, through Divine help; let us keep at our post, and be willing to do or suffer what may be appointed for us; and then, however little this may be, it will be accepted. Many,

many thousands, who think they have done nothing, who conclude they are unprofitable servants indeed, will certainly be, to their own humbling astonishment, finally owned and accepted of God. "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?" were the humble queries of those, whom the Judge of quick and dead pronounced "blessed of His Father."

Let us then, my dear friend, be encouraged to persevere in the way that is cast up for us, doing with cheerfulness and uprightness of heart, whatsoever our hands find to do, in our humble stations; making the will of our heavenly Father the only rule of our conduct, so far as we are favoured distinctly to know it. Remember the precept of our blessed Lord, "take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Do not afflict thyself by looking forward towards future trials, nor

anticipate evils that may never come ; but repose thyself in the all-sufficiency and unceasing vigilance of Israel's Shepherd, who loveth and careth for thy children far more than it is possible for thee to do. Cast all thy care upon Him ; put thy whole trust in Him ; love and serve Him as thy father did, with cheerfulness and full purpose of heart ; and then His blessing will rest upon thee and upon thy house. Amen.

My wife unites in dear love to thee, to Robert, to Rachel, to Abigail, and Margaret, with thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XXXIX.

TO LINDLEY MURRAY.

Dear Friend,

The letter and book thou wast so kind as to send me by R. R., I received with gratitude ; for, though personally unknown, (yet not so by character,) I have no doubt of thy being a fellow-servant of those who serve the

best of blessed Masters; and if I do at all desire to be numbered with these, I can say I love my fellow servants, of every department, in the heavenly house. If I covet anything from or for my fellow-creatures, it is an increase of this disinterested love, and an increasing capacity in myself to receive and return that love.

The book will, I hope, be useful to many; from a child, I have been sensible of the benefit of reading the lives of good men; it has a natural tendency to stir up the pure mind. I have no doubt it will afford a pleasing, thankful retrospect, when thy day's work shall be nearly finished, that thou hast been diligent in disinterestedly serving thy generation, in things useful and of good report. May both thou and I, my dear friend, be so strengthened to occupy with the talents we have received, that when the day of reckoning shall come, we may, through Divine Mercy, be received amongst the good and faithful,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XL.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 5th Mo. 10, 1803.

My dear Friend,

Near the time when it happened, I heard of the decease of thy dear wife. Since that time, I have often thought of the severe trial and affliction this would be to thee; and should have told thee so before now, but that I know how ineffectual words, and the expression of sympathy, are to heal, or much to alleviate, the pain of wounds occasioned by such a stroke. I knew also, that every help that could be had this way, the skilful friends and near relations about thee, would wisely and affectionately furnish; but it is the Physician of soul and body, that only can, and certainly will, help and heal all that apply to Him, and have their expectation from Him. That thou art one of this happy number, I have no doubt; and therefore I have confidence that thy mind will, in due time, be tranquillized and comforted by Him who hath been with thee all thy life long, and hitherto supported thee.

Dear Rebecca is, no doubt, arrived safe in a better country, towards which she hath long been travelling with a steady and even pace. In a little while we may, through continued mercy and help, follow after. Thou and I, from our advanced age, can be at no great distance from the end of our pilgrimage ; and then, let us humbly hope, we also may be admitted to unite and be joined with all those, who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises. In the mean time, let us contend for the faith, and abide in the patience, of which most certainly we shall have need, until our warfare be accomplished. We are now in the evening of life ; there cannot be a great deal for us to do here ; but if there be a little yet remaining, to finish the day's work, let us do that little well, and let us do it cheerfully. Strength will be afforded, never fear, equal to the day ; and remember the holy precept, " take no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I do sincerely desire, the Lord Almighty may preserve thee, and direct all

thy future movements in that way that will most conduce to His glory, and thy present and future happiness ; and I know it is His blessed will thus to deal with thee, and to keep thee from every thing that can do thee hurt. So let it be, saith thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 13, 1804.

My dear Friend,

It was very pleasant to me to receive a letter from thee, after so long a silence. I was well aware the consequences of the successive events which had taken place in thy family, would be likely for some time to engage thy attention, and I heard of thy journey into the west, so that I did not much expect to hear from thee until after thy return. I had no doubt thou sometimes rememberedst me, which I hope thou wilt always do ; as I

also have very often thought of thee, with the same desires for thee as for myself, that now, in the decline of life, we may so pass the residue of our time here, in conformity to the will and example of the blessed Master, that we may finally stand approved of Him. To thy leaving Coalbrook Dale, I have little to say ; I have no doubt thou hast thy reasons for this movement. Thou hast lived long, and been much blessed, and made a blessing to many others in the place of thy present residence ; and I hope this will continue to be the case, wherever thou mayst make the place of thy abode. If Bristol should furnish a comfortable home, I shall be glad of it ; but if it do not, I would not have thee stay there : the whole land is before thee.

I have, through undeserved mercy, enjoyed my health this last year, as for sixty-one years past, with very little interruption, and I have been enabled to move about, in the home circuit, in the discharge of my religious duty, more than in any former year ; and though I certainly have, and ought to have, a very humble opinion of any little service I may

be enabled to perform in the Church of Christ, yet, in these movements, I have been favoured with the evidence of Divine peace.

My family are in tolerable health, and my little temporal affairs much as usual. I think I can say, with some good degree of truth, what I have somewhere read,

“ The things eternal I pursue,
 “ A happiness beyond the view
 “ Of those who basely pant
 “ For things by nature felt and seen ;
 “ Their honours, wealth, and pleasures mean,
 “ I neither have nor want.”

It is and will always be a gratification to me to hear from thee ; when thou art a little settled at Bristol, I hope thou wilt let me know where to think of thee. Do not be over anxious about any thing ; be quiet, abide in the patience, and resignation, and meekness of the Holy Jesus, and in that charity which beareth, hopeth, and believeth all things. This is that name of the Lord which is a strong tower, whereunto the righteous flee, and find safety ; and here, my dear friend, thou wilt be secure from every thing that

would do thee hurt, and also experience an increasing preparation for a rich inheritance in that glorious kingdom, which consists in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

I am, my dear friend, with the salutation of unfeigned love, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 11th Mo. 3, 1804.

My dear Friend,

Thy letter, dated the 29th of 10th Mo. I received the 31st. It is true, it seems long since I heard from thee before ; I thought it so, but there has been no long suspension of frequent, affectionate remembrance, and brotherly regard ; nor have I any fear of this declining, how seldom soever we may see or write to each other ; from our advanced age, this can but continue a short time,

but I have no expectation that our friendship will ever cease.

Thou dost not tell me that Bristol is likely to prove to thee a pleasant situation, so I have only to hope it. I am not so ignorant of the nature of this world, as to believe there are many, if any comforts, to be enjoyed in it without some alloy ; however, of this I am fully persuaded, that the way to the Kingdom of Heaven, and Crown of Righteousness, is the way of the Cross, and through many tribulations ; yet there is no cause to be discouraged, because the Captain of our salvation is with us, and hath victoriously trodden the path before us, and was, as the apostle said, made “ perfect through sufferings.” In a very little time, the small measure of suffering allotted to us will be accomplished, and all the tears of the redeemed will be wiped away ; and I have not the shadow of a doubt before me, that this will, by and by, in the Lord’s time, be our happy experience. Let us then, improve every talent, that the five may gain other five, and we finally receive the answer of “ well done.” Let us be faithful and

vigilant, in the stewardship committed unto us ; and let slip no opportunity of doing good. Let it be remembered, that our blessed Lord did not say to those on His right hand, whom he pronounced “blessed,” ye have preached many excellent sermons, ye have been frequent and fervent in prayer ; but, “ I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me ;” “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” I will not say to thee, my dear friend, go and do likewise, but continue to do likewise.*

JOHN THORP.

* In the letter to which this was the reply, the stewardship of almsgiving had been estimated very low, compared with that of a gospel minister ; and therefore J. T. appears to have thought it right, for the encouragement of his friend, to look at the opposite side of the question ; but his opinion of the insufficiency of good works alone, is very evident from many passages in his letters ; see Nos. 44 and 55.

Letter XLIII.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 18, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I am glad to hear thy removal to Bristol answers thy expectation. I heartily unite with thee in sentiment, that in advanced age, quietness and retirement are desirable ; indeed it has always seemed desirable to me, and through life I should have sought it in a greater degree than I have done, if I could have been more hid, without hiding also the talent I have received.

The account thou givest of thyself, and of thy experiences in spiritual things, though low in thy own estimation, are, so far as I know, very similar to those which ever have been, and ever will be given, by all the elect children of our Heavenly Father, when speaking of themselves, (making allowance for difference of complexion, and the different purposes for which different vessels may be formed.) I believe what thou hast expressed concerning thyself, would be very

much the language of them all, so that I have no manner of doubt but thou art walking in that way which hath been cast up for the ransomed, and meeting with a due proportion of those crosses, trials, and refining tribulations, through which the redeemed have ever trodden to glory. The enemy, as he hath ever done, seeketh to cast down when he cannot set people up; he trieth every way, so far as he is permitted, (for his power is limited,) to disturb, to discourage, and any way he can to hinder the Lord's work, the work of salvation, from going forward; but our gracious and Almighty Helper, He is the Prince of Peace, and He delighteth to encourage, to strengthen, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to "confirm the feeble knees:" He will give peace to those who love Him, and the victory to all who follow Him. O! saith my soul, that all those who know and love Him, who is the true Shepherd, who offered up himself a propitiatory sacrifice for their complete redemption, that all who believe in Him might be strengthened, at all times to put their whole trust in Him, for they who trust in Him shall never be confounded; and to all

these He is saying, again and again, for their encouragement, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

I have, indeed, in some of my letters to thee, recommended care and faithfulness in the stewardships to which, in the course of an allwise Providence, thou hast been appointed ; and this I have always done, if I am not mistaken, from a feeling impression and view, at the time that the blessed Master would be honoured, and thy own happiness, both here and for ever, thereby promoted. I have had no particular object or occasion in view ; nor have I had the least apprehension that, compared with others, nay, with any other that I ever knew, thou wast at all deficient in this great duty. I am not saying this by way of apology ; I know I need make none to thee ; for, as it is likely that, before very many years, thou wilt go to thy treasure, I wish thou mayst, and I have no doubt thou wilt, find much laid up in heaven. I speak on this subject with freedom, because thou hast ears to hear ; and because I never heard, nor ever shall hear,

of any who thought they had done too much good ; that they had sympathized too much with their brethren in a low estate, and been too attentive to the wants and sufferings of their fellow-creatures ; and that they had taken too much care and pains to endeavour to relieve them. Perhaps I have said too much, but knowing that thou art wise to discriminate, I have no fear of misleading thee, either into right or left-hand errors ; so, wishing thee the glorious reward of good labours, I remain, thy sincerely affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLIV.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 25, 1804.

My dear Friend,

I will relate to thee, at this time, a short anecdote which I had from James Thornton, of America, one of the first of the first

rank who have visited us from that quarter of the world. He said, when Anthony Benezet was in his last illness, and very near his death, he went to see him. Anthony had been long distinguished, as a lover and benefactor of mankind ; but when James came into the room, he said he never had been more deeply impressed, with a sense of spiritual poverty, than he was at that time ; and as he sat under these feelings, a view opened, how little all the merits of good works can avail, or be relied on, at such a time, or any thing short of our holy Redeemer. He took leave of him under these impressions, and the good man died I think very soon after, and James attended his burial ; but, he said, when he entered into the house, it felt to him as if it were Divinely perfumed ; something so like the opening of heaven, and a sense of the Divine Presence, as he had at no other time experienced. What a striking conformity between the death of this good man and that of his blessed Master ! I thought this little story deserved to be remembered.

With the salutation of love, in which I

wish us both a continual increase, I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLV.

To ————

Manchester, ————

My dear Friend,

I received thy letter duly. If thou and I saw things through the same medium, and from the same point of view, it could hardly be that we should see them differently ; yet so it is, that, with all the deference due to thy superior powers, and the regard that I willingly pay to the uprightness of thy intention, and fruitfulness of thy understanding, I am apprehensive it will be found that, on some religious subjects, we do not think the same thing.

I do not see what can be done for those friends in ————, who have separated themselves from their former brethren ; they must be left to inherit the lot which they have

chosen, and which, I believe, they never would have chosen, if they had not first departed from true humility, and from that love which beareth all things. Palliatives will not do ; “ can two walk together, except they be agreed ; ” nay, was it possible to bring all these back again to our meeting, and that both parties were willing that they should be acknowledged members, what confusion would arise from their diversity of sentiment on the most important subjects ? They would be like the iron and clay, in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar’s image ; they might seem to adhere, but they never would incorporate. “ Jerusalem is as a city that is compact together ; ” but a church made up of members, of religious sentiments so various and inconsistent, would be much more like Babel—a confusion of one language into many, than the bride, the Lamb’s wife, to whom the Lord hath again restored a pure language, for the language of the Spirit of God, the true original, is *one*. I am sorry for these people, because I am so fully persuaded they have departed from the way of peace and usefulness, and that he who be-

guiled the woman in Paradise, hath beguiled some of them, who may have been instruments in deceiving many others. However, circumstanced as they are, and under their present professions, I know of no better counsel than that of Gamaliel : “ Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought.”

On the subject of education, I never was an advocate for ignorance ; I contend against the acquisition of no kind of knowledge, but that which cannot be purchased but by the expense of innocence. I should never discourage my children, at a proper age, from acquainting themselves with the religious systems and practices of any professors of the Christian name ; but where parents themselves have been so happy as to buy the truth ; to find “ the way of peace ;” to have learned, in the school of Christ, the precepts of His holy law written in their hearts ; who know the voice of the true Shepherd, and are concerned to follow Him, (turning from the voice of every stranger ;) who know His ways to be “ ways of pleas-

antness, and all His paths to be peace ;” is there any room for hesitation, what should be the main object and principal care of such parents, in the education of their children ? must it not be, to do all in their power to bring them acquainted with this Holy Leader, and guide their feet in the footsteps of the flock of His companions ? I agree with thee, they ought to be carefully guarded against indulging any degree of slight or contempt, or uncharitableness, with respect to the religious opinions and practices of any other people.

When I consider the human offspring, with all the advantages of human learning and mental cultivation, recommended to the exertion of their own powers, under the conduct of human reason, in order to explore the paths of peace and endless happiness, even with the help of a written and attested revelation ; the subject is to me very affecting. I do not undervalue reason ; I esteem it as a precious gift of God ; but I believe it is no more capable of leading us to heaven, than our hands were made to reach it, our eyes to see it,

or our feet to carry us thither. Reason, however useful in its proper place, under the influence of Divine Light, is, like all our other faculties and powers, when under the government of the old or natural, unregenerated man, capable of dreadful prostitution. Let its own works praise it ; what hath it done for those who have professed to devote themselves most to its guidance, free from all the systems and shackles of their education ? how are these agreed, how are they united, are these “ of one heart and of one soul,” speaking the same thing ? No, no ; nothing is more evident than the contrary of all this, to those who are acquainted with the state and labours of this description of people, the reputed wise and learned of this world : Babel has always had men for its builders, but the kingdom of Heaven hath ever been made up of “ little children.”

Admitting all thou hast said, concerning the most important truths of religion, to be generally true ; and that thy remarks, on things of subordinate importance, are generally just, I do not see how much instruction

is likely to be derived from them; for we are far from being agreed about what are fundamental truths; and, I fear, we have very different sentiments concerning those things, which some count little or indifferent. That which I believe, according to the best light and understanding I am favoured with, to be my duty to do or say, and in the doing of which I have peace, and in the omission of which I feel trouble, is not to me a little or indifferent thing; though I by no means wish other people's liberty to be judged by my conscience, but would have all to attend to the discoveries of Divine Light, and pursue those things that make for peace.

The fall of all mankind, in our first father, by whose transgression "sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and our restoration by the second Adam, "the Lord from Heaven," the "Quickening Spirit," "the Resurrection and the Life;" these, surely, are the fundamental doctrines of religion; and if these are not admitted amongst its most important truths, I am sure, for my part, I can see no foundation in the nature of things, for any religion at all; cer-

tainly there can be none for the religion of the Gospel, by which we are every-where called to self-denial, and a renunciation of this world. "Except a man be born again," said our blessed Saviour, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Agreeably to this, is the doctrine of the apostle : "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." To this purport, is all the doctrine of Christ and his apostles ; how strangely then must they have read the declarations of the Gospel ! and how little must they be acquainted with the book of all books—their own hearts, who can believe that they are not by nature in a fallen, very corrupt, and degenerate state ?

The paragraph on scepticism contains, I think, a great deal of truth. I have only to say of this subject, that I believe the most

common cause of scepticism, though most remote from human observation, is the working of satan in the fallen reason of man, which E. Burroughs somewhere calls the habitation of the serpent. Indeed, thou hast said something very like this, when thou sayst, it originates in selfishness.

All endeavours to make the terms or conditions of church-membership amongst us more extensive, broad and easy, so as to admit a greater latitude and variety of sentiment and conduct, will always be in vain. 'Those who stand upon the sure Foundation, and whose principal care it is to act in the church under the direction of the Holy Head, will always have to bear their testimony against, and endeavour to preserve the Church clean from those stains, defilements, and impurities, which spring from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," all of which, in their endless diversity and operation, prevent us from entering in "at the strait gate," and persevering in that "narrow way which leadeth unto life."

With love to thyself and thy wife, I am
thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLVI.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 10th Mo. 22, 1805.

My dear Friend,

Sometimes, when I have been thinking of writing to thee, considering that our respective birth-days were approaching, and that the youngest of us had nearly accomplished his grand climacteric year, I thought of telling thee something about the state of my own mind, now the evening draws near ; but I will decline it, for I am apprehensive I should not be pleased with it, when I had written it. Perhaps the account thou givest of thyself, in a letter thou wrotest me the latter end of last year, may come as near it as any thing I should write. This much I can say, that at seasons I feel a degree of consolation and Divine peace, that cannot be expressed in words, which I would not exchange for a thousand times the treasures of both the Indies ; in comparison of which I should esteem, I do esteem, crowns and sceptres as dung and dross ; and at the much

more frequent seasons, when heavenly good is least sensibly felt, (I hope I write it with humble, heartfelt gratitude,) my faith, and hope, and confidence, are so firmly anchored on the Everlasting Rock, Christ Jesus, that when the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the storms beat, I am not greatly moved; I know Him in whom I have believed, and that he will in mercy keep all those who have committed themselves to Him. I have little doubt, nay I have no doubt, but in what I have said of myself, I have been writing thy experience also, with little or no difference, but such as may arise from our different vocations in the church, and from some difference of our natural complexions. Let us then, my dear friend, be prostrated in gratitude before our Holy Helper, who called us early to labour in the vineyard of our own hearts, and afterwards in His vineyard, the church. Let us go on our way rejoicing, though it be in tribulation; the Crown is at the end of the Christian race.

I have heard from several, good accounts of thy situation and health, which to me are

always grateful. As every day furnishes some opportunity of doing or getting some little good, or exercising some virtue, or making some little sacrifice ; so I hope we are making some little advances, every day, towards the heavenly country.

With every good desire that my heart is capable of forming, for thy present and everlasting happiness, I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLVII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 4th Mo. 10, 1806.

My dear Friend,

I was pleased to hear of the wise choice that was made of an elder in your meeting. I doubt not thou wilt soon admit the conviction, that it would not be right to determine to remain inactive ; every member of the body natural, and every member of the mystical body of Christ, hath its proper

office ; and if it do not act and move agreeably to the Divine appointment, the whole must suffer a proportionable loss ; but a word to the wise is sufficient. That thou hast survived thy seventieth year is cause of humble thankfulness. Thou canst now be at no very great distance from the end of a well-spent life, a life that hath contributed, through the Divine blessing, to the comfort of very many ; and having, like good old Simeon, been graciously favoured to see the Lord's Christ, thou wilt, like him, I have no doubt, in the time appointed of God, be dismissed from thy stewardship in peace.

The time of my continuance here draws fast to a conclusion, and though I hardly know whether I have been instrumental of any good in my generation, in the stewardship to which I have been appointed ; yet I do know I have many times, in great mercy, been strengthened to do the best I could ; and, notwithstanding all the weaknesses or deviations from rectitude, which may at any time have marked my conduct through life, I do not wish to have my time to live over again, for fear I should not do better.

I was almost afraid, by thy answer to my last, that thou hadst conceived I meant to speak something highly of my own religious attainment. I had no view like that ; I have no cause to think so, or to speak so ; I know too well what I am, and from whom all good comes. I meant only to express myself with gratitude, and to magnify His mercy, who hath helped me hitherto ; and in the continuance of whose holy help, I was and am strengthened to confide. And surely I have cause to magnify His mercy, and to speak well of His glorious name, who hath been my Shepherd from infant years, and whose rod and staff will, I humbly hope, continue to be the support and comfort of my declining years.

I am, in true love, in which my wife unites,
thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter XLVIII.**To JOHN BEVAN.**

Manchester, 5th Mo. 16, 1806.

My dear Friend,

It is very pleasant to be remembered by our fellow-travellers to the heavenly country, and to salute and be saluted by such on the way. I have so long survived the spirit and disposition to controversy on religious subjects, and have observed so little benefit derived from them, that it hath afforded me some satisfaction to see that Friends have not been hasty to answer every weak apostate scribbler, who has dared, through ignorance or presumption, to deny the fundamental truths of our holy religion.

Many, also, of the unbelieving professors of Christianity, have sought to draw Friends into disputation and wrangling, on subjects which (though they are most surely believed by the sincere Christian) are beyond the stretch of the human intellect to comprehend. Such are the controversies about what is called the Trinity, and the doctrine of the

atonement. Much injury hath been done, and much loss sustained by the discussions which have been printed on these subjects, human reason affirming, and human reason denying, in equal ignorance of these stupendous and mysterious subjects. Perhaps all that is necessary for us to know, or that mankind are capable of receiving, stand in their best state of manifestation, as they are revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

May that Mercy by which we were early visited, and which hath graciously followed us hitherto, vouchsafe to be with us now in our declining years, and that we may happily experience Him, who condescended to be our morning light, and the stay of our youth, to be our evening song, and the staff of our old age ; that through the continuance of His holy help, we may accomplish the work which may be given us to do, to the praise of Him who hath called us, and our own everlasting peace ; that, when the time of reckoning shall come, we may be numbered amongst the “ good and faithful.”

From thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXIX.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 21, 1806.

My dear Friend,

Thy letter of the 6th instant I received duly. It was seasonable, and very acceptable ; and so far as I am capable of being comforted by a letter, I was comforted by it. But, however kind and skilful the application, wounds must have time to heal. I hope I do not murmur ; I want no arguments to convince me that the “ Judge of all the earth ” will certainly “ do right ; ” I wish to be thankful for the inestimable favour I have received from Him, in giving to me a most faithful and affectionate wife for thirty-one years ; one singularly fitted to be a help meet to me ; for, I believe I am very safe in saying, that a life more exemplary, in filling up, with unremitting diligence, every duty belonging to her humble station, hath never yet, nor ever will be found. We have both reason to be satisfied, nay thankful, that in the loss of our faithful companions, the loss

is only our's ; their's is the gain. I do not therefore sorrow at those " who have no hope ;" I have no doubt but that, through the unfailing mercy of our Heavenly Father, and the atonement and intercession of the ever-blessed Jesus, our dear departed wives, according to their measure, will be fixed in their respective stations of eternal blessedness.

At seasons, I can bless the name of Him, who lives for ever, for what He hath given, and for what He hath taken away ; yet I feel my loss almost continually, and very often all my prospects seem clouded, and every view of the future here is gloom and shade. Much of this does not appear to others, and I am mostly favoured with an humble degree of holy quiet, a measure of that peace which the blessed Master gives to those who believe and trust in Him. Thy remembrance of me, at such a time as this, was very kind ; it was, indeed, a genuine, grateful fruit of that friendship which hath long subsisted between us, and which, I hope, will last for ever. I shall be glad to hear of the re-establishment of thy health ; but whether we are

permitted a longer or shorter stay in these earthly tabernacles, I do sincerely desire we may be preserved under the direction and keeping of Israel's Shepherd, and then all will be well.

Priscilla Hannah Gurney's remembrance of me was very acceptable. I wish the remembrance of my love to be presented to her. At home or abroad, I trust she is in the Master's service, doing all the good she can; yet a little while, and that encouraging declaration will be accomplished in her experience, that the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High; therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown, from the Lord's hand; for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with his arm shall He protect them.

That thou and I, my dear friend, may finally make a part, and have our lot amongst that happy number, is the frequent prayer of thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter L.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 2nd Mo. 19, 1807.

My dear Friend,

Without calculating who wrote last, I begin to think it a long time since I wrote to thee; and having no doubt it will be received as it is meant, I will begin by saying, that my love, solicitude, and concern for thee, and for thy happiness, will, I believe, never experience any decrease; and I have no doubt of retaining as much of thy regard and esteem as I deserve.

We have both now numbered one more year to our age, and both of us have lived a longer time than falls to the lot of mankind generally, and I hope the time has not passed wholly unimproved; nay, I trust, our fellow-pilgrims have been rather benefited by it; I have no doubt of this with respect to thee. What now remains but that, with increasing care and diligence, we endeavour to steer safe into the harbour or port of everlasting rest? and through the continued

guidance of the Heavenly Pilot, I have a settled hope, this will be our happy experience, in the Lord's time. Whilst we are here, we may expect the waves will roll upon us ; and we may be a little tossed, now and then ; but they will not overflow us ; whilst Jesus is in the vessel, we have nothing to fear. He who hath conducted us thus far, and preserved us in the voyage through life hitherto, will land us safely at last, I have no doubt, in His own holy and everlasting kingdom.

JOHN THORP.

Letter XL.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 2nd Mo. 5, 1808.

My dear Friend,

It was very kind of thee to write to me by thy nephew Richard Ball. If thy letter had only contained an account of thy health, now in thy seventy-third year, it would have been very interesting intelligence to me :

but I find thou art still busy, and no wonder, in such an extensive stewardship. Well ! thine is a pleasant stewardship ; but I envy no man's lot. Thou art sure thou art instrumental of much good, both to the present and to succeeding generations ; and it certainly does afford a very comfortable reflection, in the close of time, that we have contributed to the comfort and accommodation of our fellow pilgrims, in our progress through this world of deep probation. And beyond all doubt, it must be pleasing to the Father of the universal family, to see some of His children, to whom He hath committed much, made willing, under his benevolent influence, to relieve the wants of others. I never had much to give, but I remember an instance, by which I was deeply instructed in the nature of Christian charity. One evening, when I lived in London, as I passed by rather a retired corner of a street, a poor woman sat, (I think with a child in her arms,) and very modestly asked charity. I felt pity strongly raised in my heart, and a language like this was feelingly raised in it, the Lord help thee ; but I passed by, and it very

livingly arose in my heart, by what means ? by putting it into the hearts of such as can feel as thou now dost, to relieve her. I turned back, and gave her something ; but I have no need to tell these little stories to thee.

We have had a very hard and severely cold winter, and that, added to the winter of age, and that I have not all the comforts I once had, though it hath not much, if at all, affected my health, I think it has a little depressed my spirits ; so that I have not been able to think of moving very far from home ; but acquiescence with every allotment of our Lord's providence, is not only our reasonable duty, but the only way to peace.

Bristol is a long way off ; if thou livedst no more than thirty or forty miles off, I would many a time come to see thee. I am ready to think, sometimes, that I seem of little use in the creation ; yet, though I have no fixed employ or engagement in business, thou wouldst hardly believe how fully my time is filled up ; and being now and then employed in the blessed Master's service, encourages me to hope that I do not altogether live in vain.

May that Mercy, which hath followed thee hitherto, continue to support and comfort thee ; and when thy day's work shall be finished, may thy latter end be blessed, and full of peace.

Pray for me, my dear friend, that this also may be my happy experience.

Present the salutation of my love to P. H. Gurney, to whom I wish patience, perseverance, and preservation.

JOHN THORP.

Letter LII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 7th Mo. 26, 1808.

My dear Friend,

Last sixth day evening, after an absence of more than ten weeks, I got safe to Manchester in health and peace, where I was kindly received by my relations and friends. I staid nearly four days at Worcester, and was at most of the friends' houses ; and from thence I went to Coalbrook Dale, where I

stopped about fifteen days. I was at most of their houses, and at the New Dale, and from thence, by the monthly meeting at Shrewsbury, through Chester home. I had not all this in view when I left you ; but I think I have reason to believe, it was in the ordering of His gracious Providence, who is yet leading the blind by a way which they know not, and guiding them in paths that they have not known ; so that my little journey affords a pleasing, grateful retrospect.

If our dear people did but live in the truth they profess, and act under its holy influence, they would indeed be as a kingdom of priests, and for a holy nation ; but through the lamentable prevalence of the love of this world, the want of more uniform labour, for heavenly bread and heavenly riches, and living so much at ease, and this, (with some happy exceptions,) being so generally the case, I am sometimes ready to fear lest we should become too generally a lifeless, formal, superficial people. And as I believe the proverb is mostly true, like people like priest, I am persuaded there is great danger (what else can be expected ?) that what

little there is of ministry amongst us, should become too much a superficial ministry. Have we not cause to be alarmed, lest others should come and take our crown ?

Remember my dear love to Priscilla Hannah Gurney and to Sarah Allen, of whose kind attention I shall long retain a grateful remembrance. It was very pleasant to me, to see the close of a well spent life made happy by such domestic associates ; I mean as happy as thou expectest to be, or perhaps as the nature of things will admit, in this present world : but there are better things in reserve.

Persevere, my dear friend, in the way of humility, self-denial, and faithfulness, and “a crown of righteousness” will soon be given thee, “that fadeth not away.”

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LIII.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 1, 1808.

My dear Friend,

The mental languor thou complainest of, may well be expected after thy illness ; but if we should not this way account for it, thou and I have now to expect to feel the infirmities of age, when the vigour of the system must be greatly declined. The fervours of devotion, in which we most delight, are not always best for us ; and I accord with the sentiment of a pious author, that “ if the will spirit stand right, the changes of creaturely fervour lessen not our union with God.” I know the enemy is always accusing us, and would dispose us to accuse ourselves ; but we have a merciful High-priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Let us, then, remember that apostolic exhortation, “ Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.”

We are also very liable to be mistaken in

our opinions, how it fares with others, who may be sitting with us. With regard to myself, I have little to say ; I am favoured with health ; but it is winter ; it is also the winter of age, and to me it seems like winter in the revolution of the Lord's year ; and what can one say, or what can one do, in such a case ?—why, endeavour after silent, patient submission, and be thankful, if we can, for the many undeserved mercies which yet remain.

Thou hast done a good day's work ; I have done but little ; I am not at all disposed to flatter ; but I would counteract the enemy, who, I know, would always spread discouragement both before thee and me.

Farewell, my dear friend ; to hear from thee is always pleasant to thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LIV.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 5th Mo. 2, 1809.

My dear Friend,

I say to myself (though perhaps it is not always good reasoning,) I have nothing new to say to my dear friends. I think of them often; I love them increasingly; I look forward in hope, to that blessed period, when there will be no more need of pen and ink in our communications, and when they will be purged from all impurities, and all impediments. If thou and I should land safely in the heavenly country, this time can be at no great distance from us; a few more days and nights, and we shall have done with all the shackles of mortality.

Those genuine traits of humility and self-abasement, which run through all thy letters, are very instructive, pleasant, and comfortable to me; because I know these heavenly virtues are only taught to the disciples of Him, who was "meek and lowly in heart:" and I have often been thankful, and my soul

hath worshipped many times before this blessed Master, in feeling and observing, that He knows how to teach these blessed lessons, and is still teaching them to many, whose natural dispositions and circumstances are most unfavourable to this sort of learning.

I sincerely wish, for myself and thee, that we may be strengthened to do or suffer what little may yet remain to fill up the measure of our duty ; and I have no doubt at all, but we shall be thus supported, and that He, who hath been our morning light, will be our evening song.

I am, with the salutation of brotherly love;
thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LV.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 15, 1809.

My dear Friend,

I sometimes wonder that there should be any such thing as self-righteousness in the world ; or that any should think they have any claim, from merits, to rewards. But we have both cause humbly and gratefully to acknowledge, that mercy and goodness have followed us all the days of our lives, and, I have confidence to believe, will be continued to us for-ever. Let us, then, contend for this faith, and possess our souls in patience. We have both had many trials, in passing through this vale of tears, and many mercies to acknowledge ; and I humbly hope and pray, that He who hitherto hath helped us, will continue to be with us, and finally give us an inheritance in His everlasting kingdom.

I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LVI.

To ———

9th Mo. 11, 1809.

I received thy letter, and should be glad if I might be enabled to say any thing in answer to it, that might contribute to thy comfort and instruction. It is written in the Scriptures, "ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss:" "hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name." The first petition, in that prayer which our blessed Lord taught his disciples, is, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done;" when the heart is thus humbled in submission, so as to make a sacrifice of its own will to the will of God, all complaints are over; and to that state of mind, every dispensation is sanctified, whether it be sweet or bitter, darkness or light, "all things work together for good." But, until our wills are thus subjected, it is in vain we look for peace. It is not the clamorous importunity, travail, and labour of the natural man, to be favoured with Divine consolation and peace, that will be

heard or answered; but the prayer that arises from the sensible operation of the Spirit of God in the heart, will never be sent empty away; for, as its prayer is, that the will of God may be done, whilst preserved in that submission, it never can complain, because it is his blessed will to deal with us in that way, which He, who knoweth all our wants, as well as weaknesses, sees to be best for us. Surely He knows best what to give, and what to deny, in order to subject the creaturely will, that His holy will may be done in us and by us, that He alone may rule whose right it is.

Go to meetings in a child-like state of mind, (the infant child does not make its choice of this or that, but is wholly dependent, being unable to do any thing for itself,) and when there, have no dependence at all upon any thing thou canst do for thyself, but endeavour to gather into a meek, patient resignation, trusting in the mere mercy of God in Christ Jesus, in Him who suffered for us without the gates of Jerusalem, and spiritually reveals himself in the hearts of all men. Thus believing in Him, and

gathering to Him, as thou endeavourest to possess thy soul in patience, there is no possibility of thy missing that eternal salvation, of which Jesus is the author ; for He hath said, “ him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” In all thy buffetings, afflictions, and conflicts, look to Him for help, on whom help is laid, and who is “ touched with the feeling of our infirmities ;” for there is salvation in no other name.

It is strange thou shouldst ask, what we are to understand by the grace of God, or what is meant by our coming to Christ. In every sense of the word, thou hast great cause to know what the grace of God is, both as it stands for the favour of God, and a principle of holiness in the soul ; and surely, thy long and ardent solicitude, to obtain peace and a resting-place in God, cannot leave thee ignorant what is meant by coming to Christ, who is both the peace, the rest, and sabbath of the soul ; whose blood, outwardly shed, and divine life and nature from Him, inwardly renewed, are the changing and salvation of the soul.

Do not give in to curious inquiries and

reasoning about this or that ; but abide in the simplicity, and in the patience, and never suffer the enemy to lead thee to doubt this most certain truth, that all the dispensations of God, which thou hast passed through, or art now under, are administered in unerring Wisdom, and are adapted, by that Wisdom, to accomplish thy complete redemption.

Being an entire stranger, I do not know how proper it may be for me to say, that to be pretty constantly employed in any way useful, according to thy ability, would make time less tedious, and the attempts of Satan less grievous. Improper, distressing, and wandering thoughts, will not, I think, long afflict those who are usefully employed, and turn away from them. We can no more help wandering thoughts, than we can prevent the birds from flying over our heads ; but we can prevent them from making nests in our hair.

With desires for thy comfort, and peace in God, through an humble, patient submission and resignation to Him, I am thy respectful friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LVII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 4th Mo. 23, 1810.

My dear Friend,

I know that, with all the comforts we can have in this life, old age has infirmities and wants which the consolations of this world cannot relieve: and therefore, we look forward in humble hope to a better life and country, where our enjoyments will be both permanent and complete. I look upon my dear friend as near the celestial shore, and moving towards it under the auspicious conduct of the Captain of our Salvation; and with greater certainty, because under the influence of that awful fear, which keeps the heart clean.

The removal of dear Deborah Darby, however others may view it, to me affords a comfortable reflection; she had fought a good fight, she had finished the work that was given her to do, and is no doubt now entered into that rest which is glorious. With regard to the Church's loss, I dare say

nothing ; we know who it is, that of “stones can raise up children unto Abraham,” who can work by many or by few, with or without instruments. We may safely leave the work, the great work of redemption, to Him who hath the power, and to whom belongs the glory, evermore,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LVIII.

TO ELIZABETH RATHBONE.

Manchester, ———

Thou hast been so much the companion of my thoughts, for some days back, attended with such a degree of solicitude on thy account, that I am induced to think it will afford myself some relief, and perhaps not be burdensome to thee, if I attempt, though in a few lines, some little communication.

Thou sayst nothing to me about thy health, and yet I fear and care abundantly about it. It is, if I am not mistaken, in that love which springs from the Centre of Unity,

in which the children of our Heavenly Father fear, and love, and care, for one another, that I have felt so much nearness and solicitude for thee ; it is not that I have any fear, more or less, with regard to thy eternal state ; not the least shadow of a doubt attends my mind in this respect, that all will be well ; that an inheritance in the Holy City will be secured, that a Heavenly Mansion will be prepared for thee, by Him who suffered for us, who trod “ the wine-press alone,” and there was none with Him, whose “ visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men !” He hath trodden the gloomy path, and sanctified it unto us ; He hath prepared for thee, He hath cast up for all who love Him, a Holy Highway into the Paradise of God. Whatever doubts or fears may at any time arise ; however thy faith may at any time, in the hour and power of darkness, be ready to fail ; for truly “ we wrestle not against flesh and blood” only, yet, through His gracious and sure help, to whom “ all power is given in Heaven and in earth,” thou wilt be sustained, supported, and made more than con-

queror, and finally experience thy robes to be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, so that thou mayst be fitted to unite with the "hundred and forty and four thousand," whom John saw standing with the Lamb on Mount Sion, and with all them who have obtained the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, in that new song, (which the redeemed only can learn) the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Farewell, my dear friend, I will only add, the sincere prayer of my heart, that the great, the good, the true Shepherd of Israel, who loves, who cares, who watcheth over His people for good, who laid down His life for them, may direct and guide thee by His counsel, and have thee always in His keeping.

JOHN THORP.

Letter LIX.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 1, 1811.

My dear Friend,

It was very pleasant to me to receive a letter from thee, and such a letter in thy 76th year. I, who am seven years younger, feel the effects of old age both in mind and body; but let us not accuse ourselves, or listen to the accuser of the brethren, because our faculties and powers are on the decline. Meekness, humility, and patience, are a cure for all sores; our strength and powers are equal to all we have to do, or to all that is required of us. It is our departure from humble submission, and wanting to feel more of the fervour of devotion, not willing to live by faith, and possess our souls in patience, that is a fruitful source of much unprofitable anxiety. How much of this appears in the few diaries we have published; and, I am persuaded, in the experience of many pious people, who suffer greatly, because they are unskilfully taught.

to believe, that if it were not owing to some omission of duty, they would more frequently, perhaps always, (particularly in meetings,) be favoured with these sensible feelings and enjoyments of heavenly goodness. Many, many, I believe, put on a much more painful pilgrimage, and experience many doubts and tossings, which would certainly be avoided by a wise attention to that holy precept, "in your patience possess ye your souls." To how many religious people might it be said by the blessed Master, as formerly to Peter, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" though it is by no means in our power to put ourselves into possession of those Divine consolations, that sometimes, in unmerited mercy, are vouchsafed. I wish to be thankful, truly thankful, to be favoured to feel no condemnation.

There is, I think, a great deal of comfortable instruction and truth in the remark, that "the Christian's crown in this life is hid under the cross, that we cannot see it," and doubtless laid up safely there for us, when our warfare is accomplished. What cause

have I to be thankful for this, and a thousand other mercies ; but to feel suitably thankful for favours, or compunction for our infirmities, is not at our command. How earnestly do I sometimes desire a more fervent, sensible feeling of gratitude for favours I have not deserved, and repentance for all I have done amiss ; but, as I have said before, perhaps we may be too solicitous for these sensible fervours of devotion. My mind hath often been stayed and comforted, in recollecting these observations of an experienced Christian : “ Do not look for or expect the same degrees of sensible fervour ; the matter lies not there ; nature will have its share ; but the ups and downs of that are to be overlooked, whilst your will-spirit is good and set right, the changes of creaturely fervour lessen not your union with God.”

Farewell, my dear friend ; may the Divine blessing comfort and support our declining years, and enable us to finish the little work that may remain for us to do ; that finally we may be found worthy to enter into the joy of our Lord.

JOHN THORP.

Letter LX.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 4th Mo. 30, 1812.

My dear Friend,

Yesterday, I received thy very acceptable letter. Our correspondence has now continued twenty-five years ; and, as I believe it commenced under the auspicious influence of our blessed Master, so I humbly hope, it has been in some degree fruitful to His praise. I am glad to hear thy health is restored ; mine, through great mercy, does not much decline, though I can feel every year that I grow older. I have been little from home all the winter, and for long it hath been very cold weather, the east wind almost continually blowing. Reading, retirement, calling sometimes to see a friend, and attending meetings, and meeting matters, with a little walk every day, is the manner in which my time is mostly spent. I expect that, whilst thou art able, thy time will be more usefully employed ; but truly, at our time of life, I think we should endea-

your to cast off every burden, and to break every yoke, that we might, without distraction, “press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

With regard to myself, if I am poor, it is in the best things, which has been my experience in an unusual degree of late, and with which I hope I am learning to be content. Respecting the things of this life, I can thankfully say, with good old Jacob, “God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough.” Both in the commercial and political hemisphere, accumulated clouds of darkness have long been gathering; what may be the result, is yet awfully uncertain; neither does there appear much to rejoice in, even in our little Society.

I know how to make allowance for old age, and for inaptitude at writing. I stand in need of these allowances more than thou dost; and yet I will hope thou wilt not only remember, but, at some time, write a line or two to thy sincerely affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXL.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 12th Mo. 12, 1812.

My dear Friend,

When I was last with thee thou expressedst a wish to hear from me sometimes. I do not frequently feel much qualification for writing, for I also am a poor man, and no stranger to trials of faith and patience. And although I know thou hast excellences which I do not possess, and advantages in which I have little share, yet, I am persuaded, thou art not unfrequently “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” But is this not a common case? I believe it is much more so than we are aware of. Alas! how often do we see sincere Christians ready to complain; often is their faith deeply tried, and their hope nearly dried up; often ready to call every thing in question, and “go mourning all the day long.” But is there not a cause? “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Our native maladies must be eradicated, and the dangers and temptations of

our various situations guarded and provided against. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that a greater degree of humility may be necessary for those, whose gifts and stations strongly dispose to self-exaltation, than for others, whose condition is in all respects very humiliating.

Oh! how little do we comprehend of that unfathomable Wisdom and Goodness, by which the discipline exercised over us is directed, in order to secure our eternal happiness; can we doubt that the lowness, the spiritual poverty and depression, almost to despondency, permitted to be the experience of many devoted servants of God, are not to them blessings in disguise? But, perhaps, it is not permitted that we should always think so; *that* might frustrate the Divine intention in those dispensations. To commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing, under every dispensation of His wisdom and providence, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, is the greatest good we can do to ourselves, whatever be our condition; and although trials of faith and patience should continue, or be often renewed,

during our continuance in this probationary state, yet, certainly, when the conflicts of mortality are over, we shall then see the ineffable goodness of our Heavenly Father in all His dispensations, and that, "though clouds and darkness have been round about Him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Was not the Captain of our Salvation made perfect through sufferings? and had not every individual, of that innumerable multitude which John saw clothed in white, come "out of great tribulation? The way of the Cross hath ever been the high-way to the kingdom. Tell me of one true child of God, in the Old Testament or the New, or any amongst our own people, even the most distinguished, who have not passed, or are passing, through "great tribulation."

I know how natural it is to think, and be ready to say, no doubt the sincere children of God have all had their trials, but mine are very different; more likely, I fear, to unfit me for, than to ensure, the Crown of Righteousness. I think it very probable, that all have had these fears, and these reflections.

No doubt, our crosses are very different, but all wisely adapted to the station in which we are placed, and the duties to which we are called, in our progress through this vale of tears. It is in my heart to say to thee, my dear friend, be not afraid ; the time is near, when the crown of righteousness will be given thee, and thy everlasting lot will be with those, who “ shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,” “ for the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Amen !
Amen !

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXII.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 6th Mo. 10, 1813.

My dear Friend,

Thy letter of the 11th of last 3d Month I received duly. It was, as all thine have ever been, a very welcome one to me. I have now been reading it afresh, with a view to make some reply. The first thing I meet with, to account for thy not having written to me sooner, is thy mental poverty and barrenness. This reason I well understand, it being very much my own experience; and indeed it is likely it may continue to be very much our experience, while we are clothed with these mortal bodies; but as this state calls for the exercise of faith and patience, it may, as I hope it will, prove a profitable dispensation to us both. Let us, then, be willing to submit to our allotment, as directed by Him who only is wise, and who certainly, in love that changeth not, dispenseth to us what is best for us, and what will most certainly conduce to our everlasting benefit.

The death of thy sister, in a good old age, and who, I doubt not, has passed from this world to a better, has left thee in a situation to which my own is nearly similar. My father left five children, one only is living besides myself, who is now in his 76th year. Thus generations pass away ; but no matter, if at last we may be prepared to give, as thou hast said, an acceptable account of our stewardship. That this will be thy happy experience, thou must excuse me if I say again, I have no shadow of doubt ; and with regard to myself, I am not destitute of hope, for though many have been better stewards of the manifold grace of God than I have been, I am not conscious, at any time in my religious labours, of having done the work of the Lord deceitfully. Yet I might have been more diligent ; I might have waited more frequently at Wisdom's gate ; I might have been more devoted, and like the holy prophet, more ready to say, " Here am I, send me." But I trust in Divine Mercy, knowing in " whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Of dear Priscilla we have had a very poor account ; I would willingly hope her case may not be so bad as some have apprehended ; however that be, of this I am persuaded, she is under the care of the best Physician, who will finally heal all her diseases, and crown her with loving kindness and tender mercies. When thou hast opportunity, please to remember my dear love to her, and tell her to keep fast hold of faith and patience. Those who live to old age, whatever be their circumstances with regard to property, have often to experience their nearest connections dissolved, their contemporaries falling on every side, many sources, of their usual consolations failing, with increasing infirmities, sometimes to a degree of second childhood : yet none of these things ought to move us, who are seeking “a better country, that is a heavenly ;” and we have many unmerited mercies left, which call for daily thankfulness, and the greatest of all mercies is this, that He, who hath been with us all our life long, continueth to be with us, and will not forsake us in our grey hairs.

With the salutation of love, I now conclude, and am thy sincerely affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXIII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 28, 1814.

My dear Friend,

I feel almost ashamed that I have not before this time acknowledged the receipt of thy good letter of 9th month last. When I read thy observations on schools for adults, I thought I saw accomplished, in one instance, that Scripture which says: "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." We have three large schools erected here, two National and one Lancasterian, in which some old people have been taught to read; but an institution for that purpose, like your's, I do not expect to see here. It will be enough for Manchester, I think, to support the three already established.

That thy time is much employed, in a variety of engagements, I have no doubt ; thy gifts and calling make this necessary ; and it is a favour, both to thyself and many others, that, at so advanced an age, thou hast the ability to go through the exercise of it ; and a much greater favour it is, to be made willing to do it with faithfulness. Oh ! how happy will it be for all such, in the approaching day of reckoning.

With regard to myself, I am moving on, in my Christian pilgrimage, in a low way, yet not destitute of hope, that the dispensations I have, or may have, to pass through, may graciously be intended for my further refinement, of which I have great need ; so that, in the solemn close, I may be numbered amongst all those, who, “ through faith and patience, inherit the promises ;” but if I should be thus happy to find acceptance with God, in the awful day of decision, I am sure it will be the effects of His unfailing mercy in Christ Jesus ; for I have no claim from merits, to rewards.

We are now both advanced one year further into the vale of years ; surely it calls for

gratitude, that we have been favoured with so long a time, and with such a degree of health ; with the additional favour that, from early age, we have been apprized of the end for which all our time here was given us, and the blessed means by which we might make the necessary improvement of it. I humbly hope we have not received this grace of God in vain.

That the best of blessings may attend thee, my dear friend, in time and for ever, is the sincere desire of thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXIV.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 10, 1814.

My dear Friend,

Thy letter, dated the 20th of 4th Mo. last, I received duly, and was pleased that thou rememberedst me, and at that time I purposed to acknowledge it before now ; but,

alas! how often do we fall short of our purposes.

I have several times lately heard a good account of thy health, which was very pleasant to me; for, whilst we remain in this country, which we neither of us expect to do very long, it is indeed cause of humble gratitude, to be favoured with health, as it gives us the best opportunity of improving the dregs of time. I also am still favoured to enjoy the blessing of health, and am still engaged in the Christian warfare, and in the exercise of faith and patience; for I have cause to fear I have not yet attained to that state of purity and holiness to which we are called; but I may say, "I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Although I fear it would be difficult to find, amongst all our religious acquaintance, one who is perfectly free from all infirmities, yet I have known many, who now are, and do know many others who, when these mortal bodies shall be put off, will be bright spirits in glory.

What thou hast said of thyself, and the state of thy own mind, is so just a descrip-

tion of my own, that I question if I could have given it more exactly. Let us, then, say with holy Job, "all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Thomas Cash used to say, we could not think too lowly of ourselves, if we did not despair; and that, I hope, after so many years' experience of Divine mercy and goodness, we shall be preserved from doing; we have more cause to "thank God and take courage," more and more to press into that kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Our day's work is nearly over; let us employ the little time yet remaining in trimming our lamps, and for me to watch and pray, that all my transgressions may be blotted out, and my sins forgiven, by Him who "taketh away the sin of the world."

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXV.

To RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 1st Mo. 18, 1815.

My dear Friend,

Thy letter of the 4th of 11th month last, I received with pleasure, as an additional fruit of thy friendship, which has afforded me much comfort now for many years. It was grateful to me to hear of the continuance of thy health, which is a great favour to thyself and many others; that Sarah Allen enjoys the same blessing I am glad to hear; remember my love to her, to dear Priscilla, and S. Naish. I would not have these good women to forget me. When thou wrotest, I suppose thou hadst forgotten the conversation we had about Hugh Turford; perhaps it may occur to thee some future time.

The account thou hast given me, of the state of thy own mind, is very descriptive of my own; for, though I have been aspiring (perhaps too feebly) for more than fifty years, after religious attainments, yet my portion is often deep poverty, both in and out of meet-

ing ; yet am I not greatly dismayed, nor is my confidence much shaken, feeling as I do, some degree of that hope which is “an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.” All the dispensations of our Heavenly Father, and all the various turnings of His holy hand upon us, are, I believe, intended in mercy for our further refinement, and necessary preparation for a residence in His everlasting kingdom, which it is His gracious purpose to accomplish in us through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. At the age we both now are, we shall not have long to conflict with the trials of this present life, so that I hope it will not be presumption for us to adopt the language of this hymn :

“It will soon be done, it will soon be o’er,
 “We soon shall reach the heavenly shore,
 “Where, joining those who are gone before,
 “Shall meet to separate no more.”

Through great mercy, I am favoured with usual health, and yet I feel so much the effects of age, that I seem to myself to be almost good for nothing. Commending

thee, with my own soul, to the keeping of
Israel's Shepherd, I am, with dear love, thy
affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXVI.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 8th Mo. 9, 1815.

My dear Friend,

As we meddle not with the news of the day, nor the commotions that are in the world, and believing it to be best for us to "study to be quiet" and do our "own business," so the subjects of our letters have mostly been ourselves, and often our own infirmities, having nothing else to boast of, and these (bodily infirmities I mean) increasing with years, it is natural they should have much of our attention. In these there is no reason to expect any improvement; we should do well, and I hope we do endeavour, to live in a thankful state of mind, that we are so well as we are, and that at an age

when by much the greatest part of those who have been our contemporaries are numbered with the dead. In regard to health, I have no particular complaint, but I feel heavier, and incapable of much exertion; walking two or three miles is about the extent of my exercise, and even that is attended with some fatigue; but thou hast always been a stronger man, and I expect continuest so.

I need not tell thee I was not in London this year. I do not expect to see that great city any more. This much for the body; in respect to the ever-enduring part of the compound, I believe the Apostle's testimony, "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." And though we have had to pass through a variety of seasons in the revolution of the Lord's year, though clouds, darkness, and sometimes sunshine, have been alternately our experience, yet I humbly trust that, when

the trials of time shall be over, we shall find a resting-place in the kingdom of our blessed Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Amen.

With strong desires that the great and true Shepherd, who laid down His life for us, may have us always in His keeping, I am thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

Letter LXVII.

TO RICHARD REYNOLDS.

Manchester, 2nd Mo. 20, 1816.

My dear Friend,

Thy kind letter of the 21st of 11th month last, I received duly. The account of the death of the dear young man, thy grandson, in the flower of his age, so suddenly and unexpectedly, and at such a distance from home, was truly affecting; and I felt sympathy with thee and his mother on the occasion. But what can we say? "will not the Judge of all the earth do right." Though it be your loss, I hope it is his great gain; he has escaped

many sorrows and mortifying disappointments, which inevitably attend those who have a longer stay in this probationary state.

It is pleasant to me to receive a letter from thee in thy eightieth year; thy years and ability have been lengthened out, in mercy to thyself and many others; "for the Lord God of recompences shall surely requite."

About three months since, I had a slight paralytic affection on my right side, which, though not severe, has affected me a little in several respects, and my right hand is so shaken, as thou mayst see by this writing, that I am ready to give up writing altogether; but my mind is preserved in comfortable tranquillity. I have many things to be thankful for to the Fountain of all Good, and to bless His holy name, who hath been with me from my childhood. I do not feel much pain, and can go about a mile or two; but this severe winter I have kept pretty much in doors. I do not know that I look much worse than usual, and hitherto I have been able to attend all our meetings here; though, through my present debility, I seem of little use; but we do not serve a hard Master. By

the time thou hast read this, thou wilt think, as I do, that it is time for me to conclude.

May the blessing of our Heavenly Father attend thy continuance here, and then crown thy solemn close, when, in his own time, thou mayst be summoned to a residence in His everlasting kingdom. And if this, through Divine mercy, may be my happy experience, through the merits and mercy of our dear Redeemer, I neither ask nor desire more.

Whilst we are both in mutability, it will afford me pleasure to hear from thee. I am, with dear love, thy affectionate friend,

JOHN THORP.

*Reflections on the allotments of Providence in
the varied conditions of Mankind.*

THE Lord is the All-wise Disposer of events; He maketh rich, and maketh poor: (it is God, saith Moses, that giveth men power to get wealth.) He exalteth and abaseth at His pleasure; and though I do most firmly believe, that God “doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;” that he is a God of mercy, and knoweth all our wants, as well as our weaknesses, and will add all that His wisdom sees best, to those who first seek His kingdom, and the righteousness thereof; yet am I forced to confess, with regard to His respective outward, as well as inward administrations of prosperity and adversity, His judgments are unsearchable, “and His ways past finding out.”

It is obvious, I own, that trouble is often the result of our own perverseness, and arises from the determination of an unsanctified

will, the imprudence of our undertakings, and folly of our choice ; but then, I think, it is equally evident, that they sometimes arise from a different source, and must necessarily be resolved into the unerringly wise and inscrutable providence of God. What shall we say of Job, that perfect man's condition ? what of the hunger, thirst, and nakedness of the Apostles ? what of those who wandered about "in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy ?" and what of the holy, lowly Jesus, who had not where to lay His head ?

'The like hath been the situation of many true disciples and Christians of the purest ages ; and since, of many of the first Reformers, who have lived in valleys and desolate places, and who have been true successors of the Apostles in nakedness and want, treated as the off-scouring of all things, and to whom, indeed, the earth has been as iron, though the heavens have not been as brass. Far, very far, be it from my heart to conclude these unhappy, or to think they had cause to complain. Surely they were su-

premely blessed, and received in this life recompence a thousand-fold for all their sufferings ; but I instance them, to evince that even the favourites of heaven, as well as those who, through disobedience, frustrate the designs of Divine mercy, may be, and sometimes are, tried with a scarcity of the outward accommodations of this life.

Riches, surely, are not certain marks of Divine favour, nor prosperity an evidence that our ways please God. Doth he not sometimes give men their heart's desire, and withal send leanness into their souls? We are apt to call providences by wrong names. Afflictions, "more precious than gold that perisheth," we call curses ; and riches we call blessings, when, for once they are so, it is to be feared they are sent of God a thousand times for judgments. The distresses and troubles of Israel of old were often administered in mercy, when the people had, in fulness and prosperity, revolted from God, to bring them back again to Him, to trust and depend upon Him, and have their expectation from Him ; and if this be the gracious design of the Almighty now, in

the administration of distress and adversity, as I fully believe it often is, I am sure that such trials deserve to be considered as evidences of His merciful regard, who in this, though severe, yet more intelligible language to earthly hearts, is seeking to convince us of our dependance on Him, relation to Him, and that it is He who can bless or blast all our endeavours.

I have often thought, and it hath been confirmed in my mind, that if we were but more attentive, and disposed to obey the secret intimations of the “wonderful Counsellor,” who speaks from heaven in our hearts, we should happily make it less necessary for the Lord to speak to us so frequently in the language of affliction. Oh ! if this were but enough our case, (and I am sure it is above all things to be desired,) we should thereby avoid every snare, and be enabled happily, in the line of duty, to go forward in the lot of our appointment; and then, though our dwellings might be with the lowly, and we should have to labour for daily bread, yet, divested of anxious care, we should rest secure in His providence,

who numbereth the hairs of our heads, clothes the lilies with transcendent beauty, and hears the young lions when they cry.

If thus we were concerned to worship the Lord our God, to bless Him in the lot He hath appointed us, He would bless our bread and our water ; and if consistent with His will, and the designs of His wisdom, He can increase our corn and oil, and multiply our gold and silver. Indeed, cross occurrences, adverse providences, or afflictions, however administered, have not always their desired or intended effects : so the Lord complained formerly—" I have smitten you with blasting and mildew," " yet have ye not returned unto Me." There is an aptness in the human mind (which sees not beyond things that are natural) to rest in second causes ; and, blind to the discriminating providence of the Most High, to fix the blame on secondary agents ; but surely, " affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground."

Oh that, through the medium of Divine Light, we might look up to God ! therein we should discover the secret turnings of His

holy hand in all these things ; for I am fully persuaded, that, whatever is permitted to try us, whatever dispensations, inwardly or outwardly, we may be under, it is the dispensation of unerring Wisdom and Goodness ; and the very best for us, the greatest blessing we are capable of receiving in our present state of mind, consistent with our chiefest good. Oh ! what cause have we, therefore, to commit ourselves wholly to Him, to bless His name in every dispensation, who is the sole Arbiter of heaven and earth, who superintends the universe, whose goodness and power are equal ; who knows all situations, and is ever graciously administering to every one of us, in uniform mercy and goodness, what is most convenient for us, and all for this most desirable, most glorious purpose, to redeem, to gather us to Himself, who is the fulness of blessing and of life.

JOHN THORP.

A PRAYER.

The paper from which this Prayer is taken, is in John Thorp's hand-writing, and bears this inscription: "On third day, the 21st of 10th Month, 1794, the following Prayer was raised in my heart, and the expression of it required" It appears, on examination, that on the day mentioned, Hardshaw Monthly Meeting was held at Liverpool.]

OH Lord God Almighty, conscious that we are but dust, and that Thou art holy, that as is Thy Majesty, so is Thy mercy; we beseech Thee, look down upon us in mercy, whom Thou hast raised up, to set Thy name amongst. Take us under Thy care, and exercise Thy discipline upon us. Turn Thy hand again and again upon us; "revive Thy work in the midst of the years," that both the dross, and the tin, and the "reprobate silver," may be taken away from us. Purge our camps, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and remove from us every thing that is offensive to Thee; that so we may, according to Thy blessed purpose, become "as lights in the world," as "the salt of the earth," as waymarks to the people, as faithful standard bearers for Thee.

And inasmuch as it hath pleased Thee, O

Lord God Almighty, to pour forth Thy judgments in the earth, we pray Thee, if it be Thy will, to search by them, not only the present, but all succeeding generations. Overturn and remove every thing that obstructs the coming of Thy kingdom. Grant that Thy government and dominion may spread from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

Look down, O Lord, in mercy and compassion, on all sorts and conditions of men, Remember the poor oppressed Africans ; pour forth upon them the blessings of Thy light and peace, and remove oppression from them. Hasten, O Lord, the accomplishment of that which Thou hast spoken, that “from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, Thy name should be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense should be offered unto Thy name, and a pure offering :” that so, O Lord, all the ends of the earth may take the cup of Thy salvation, and be enabled acceptably to ascribe to Thee, glory and honour, thanksgiving and praise, might, majesty, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

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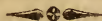
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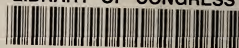
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